Farhad Gohardani
and Zahra Tizro

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ISLAM

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF IRAN

Development, Revolution and Political Violence

Political Economy of Islam

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All Middle Eastern countries, with the exception of Israel and Lebanon, profess Islam as their state religion. Islam, whether simply in words or in fact, is woven into the fabric of these societies, affecting everything from the political system, to the social, financial and economic system. Islam is a rules-based system, with the collection of rules constituting its institutions in the quest to establish societies that are just. Allah commands mankind to behave in a fair and just manner to protect the rights of others, to be fair and just with people, to be just in business dealings, to honor agreements and contracts, to help and be fair with the needy and orphans, and to be just even in dealing with enemies. Allah Commands humans to establish just societies, rulers to be just and people to stand up for the oppressed against their oppressors. It is for these reasons that it said that justice is at the heart of Islam. In the same vein, the state (policies) must step in to restore justice whenever and wherever individuals fail to comply with divine rules; government intervention must enhance justice. This series brings together scholarship from around the world focusing on global implications of the intersections between Islam, government, and the economy in Islamic countries.

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The Political Economy of Iran

Development, Revolution and Political Violence

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To our beloved Iran and the Iranian people all over the world

Preface

This study was triggered by a set of questions on the roots of the Iranian troubled history and its experiences of socio-economic underdevelopment in the last 100 years. During the last century, Iran has experienced one war, two revolutions, and multiple forms of socio-political movements, many episodes of international interventions and sanctions, and numerous instances of internal violent conflicts. Except for small episodes of upsurge in positive feelings in the revolutionary climates, Iranians seem to be deeply resentful and unhappy about almost every aspect of their own social order from their polity to their culture and economy. The economic measures like per capita income or the rate of inflation or unemployment do not tell a positive story about the Iranian economy. As Amuzegar (2014: 81) attests, Iran's economic woes include:

> high unemployment, virulent inflation, low factor productivity, slow growth, low levels of domestic savings and foreign direct investment, and relatively high but unprofitable public outlays.

Masoud Nili (2017), one of the prominent economists inside Iran and the special aid to the President Rouhani, enumerated six hyper challenges facing Iranian economy in the realms of water shortages, environmental degradation, budget deficit, pension crisis, chronic unemployment, and banking crisis. Some think tanks inside Iran have extended the number of serious socio-economic and political challenges facing the Iranian society up to 100 ones. These challenges have mired Iran in multiple forms of economic, cultural, social, and political crises manifesting themselves in the daily

experiences of crises in the gender relations (on the issue of veiling, for example), in the widespread prevalence of drug abuse, in the shocking rates of driving accidents, in the brain drain, in the capital flights, in the corruption, in the economic inequality, in the water shortages, in the ethnic tensions, in the foreign policy upheaval, in the excess volatility in the foreign currency market, in the occasional violent incidents of terrorism, in the political conflicts and riots, and in the daily calls for change of government or regime change, among others. Iran's economy is heavily addicted to the oil export, and apart from the Iranian film industry's recent success in the world market, there seems to be little or no success in establishing a niche for the Iranian economic or cultural industries in the global marketplace.

As a result, Iran is widely known at best by its films, its carpets, and its pistachios and at worst by exporting its revolution and by being a troubled and troubling country, captured in the (in)famous notion of 'axis of evil'. The Iranian culture has zigzagged between various forms of cultural arrangements, for instance, from immersion into the Western cultural products to the Islamic ones or from traditional dresses to Western clothing and the Islamic veiling. Furthermore, in the last century the Iranians experienced multiple forms of wildly diverse forms of political and economic organization of life, work, and language. Iran, as a result, has not been classified as a developed, free, just, happy, or democratic country despite more than 100 years of struggle to achieve development, freedom, justice, happiness, and democracy. The general levels of spiritual capital, natural capital, social capital, human capital, financial capital, and physical capital seem to be severely unsatisfactory to the extent that the question of "why are we backward?" is still a live and pressing issue in the public discourses in the Iranian society. Iranian economy and society seem to be extremely volatile and vulnerable to the environmental, economic, cultural, or political degradation or collapse. Iran has failed to become the 'island of stability' it has projected or sought to be.

Generally, Iran seems to have problems in modernizing its industries, its economy, and its socio-political and cultural institutions and its mindset. Recently Iran experienced one of its serial rounds of coming into conflict with the international order on the development of nuclear capabilities, leading to the emergence of a dysfunctional nuclear deal after suffering from years of debilitating forms of sanctions supported by all members of the Security Council. The expectation and the eventual act of US pulling out of the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 plunged the Iranian economy into a drastic downward trajectory to the extent that by August 2018 "the rial had devalued by 172 percent over the past 12 months, rising above

100,000 rials per dollar" (The World Bank 2018), driving the Iranian economy into a 'death spiral' (Hanke 2018). This is the latest episode in a long series of devastating confrontations between Iran and the international order in the Iran hostage crisis, in the Iran-Iraq war, in the Rushdie affair, in the Mosaddegh era of Oil Nationalization Movement, in the forced abdication of Reza Shah Pahlavi, in the Great Game in the era of Constitutional Revolution, and in the Anglo-Iranian and Russo-Iranian wars in the Qajar period. In addition, in recent years the deeper forces of the Iranian turbulent history manifested themselves in three prominent movements, namely, the Reformist Movement of 1997–2005, the Green Movement of 2009, and the bread riots of 2018, alongside many episodes of small and large socio-economic and political protests, disturbances, and uprisings. Furthermore, Iran in coalition with Russia and the Lebanese Hezbollah came into new waves of conflict with the ISIS and with the regional powers like Israel and Saudi Arabia alongside the West (America and Europe) due to its missile programme and its involvement in the regional conflicts especially in Syria but also in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and Bahrein. In the last 200 years, all these problems and troubles have driven the Iranian economy and society periodically and consistently into four types of crises: crisis of economic boom and bust, crisis in sustainable economic growth, crisis in sustainable development, and crisis of legitimacy and political stability.

This work embarks on delving deeply into the reasons behind such a volatile, troubling, and troubled modern history with its associated set of crises. To find a set of satisfactory and comprehensive answers to the relevant questions away from the prevailing soundbites, this research has gone through a thorough review of the literature on the Iranian society and economy in the last 100 years. This journey led it to delve into the deep history of Iran from its inception and evolution to the last 200 years and how it came into interactions with a wider history and culture of the Middle East and the wider world (Foltz 2016). Furthermore, this process culminated in deep theoretical investigations into the foundations of social orders and their historical evolution and involution, in what Azimi (2017: 1354) refers to as being "attentive to problems of how societies fragment or cohere". The explorations of the literature on the social order and social change alongside the literature on socio-economic development pushed the research further into the interdisciplinary literature at the intersection of politics, economics, philosophy, and psychoanalysis. One of the main lines of arguments emerged organically from this deep and wide explorations into history and theory was the following.

In pondering on the puzzle of poverty and wealth of nations, Williamson (2000) maintains that economic development should be analysed at four levels of prices, governance, institutions, and mind. When we delve deeper into what shapes minds and institutions (and mind as a social institution, Arkoun 2006) and how the four levels interact, we encounter the Heideggerian literature on being-in-the-world (*dasein*), which through Dreyfus' works (1972, 1991, 2001, 2014) and in a highly productive dialogue with Searle's social ontology (2010) and experts in artificial intelligence was connected to exploring the nature of human everydayness and embeddedness in particular spatiotemporal backgrounds and what computers (machines) and humans can and cannot do. This in turn has involved the Kantian transcendental explorations into the condition of possibility of our ways of being, becoming, knowing, and experiencing the world and ourselves. This was further linked to the Heidegger-inspired literature in neuroscience called extended mind (Clark 1997; Clark and Chalmers 1998) and to the literature on social neuroscience (Choudhury and Slaby 2012; Alos-Ferrer 2018). Dreyfus (2017: 155) also connects Foucault to Heidegger. Furthermore, Foucault's equivalent to the Heideggerian notion of *dasein* and being-in-the-world is the concept of "regime of truth" (Foucault 1984). Foucault applied his notion of 'regime of truth' to Iran and famously in the analysis of the 1979 revolution said the Iranians "don't have the same regime of truth as ours" (Afary and Anderson 2005: 125). Foucault (1980: 93–94; 1981: 8) also calls the Iranians involved in 1979 revolution as "confused voices" and connects 'the notion of production of truth to the production of wealth'. In addition, the literature on social capital also connects the production of trust to the production of wealth. If we put all these strands together, we come up with our hypothesis relating the production of truth, trust, and wealth in Iran. This hypothesis emerged organically through the critical and productive dialogue between the theoretical, historical, and empirical literatures in the spirit of grounded theory (Akhavi 1998: 696).

Furthermore, via exploring the literature on development and modernization (Lancaster and van de Walle 2018; Easterly 2014) and combining it with Foucault's notions of 'regime of truth' and 'confused voices', we could classify societies into four fuzzy categories of 'homogenous societies', 'heterogeneous societies', 'troubled societies', and 'failed societies'. Based on whether the historical evolution of societies endowing them with social coherence, political stability, and consensual 'regime of truth' or not, societies like the Western ones or Japan are classified as homogenous

societies (with one dominant regime of truth; modernity in the West, for instance). Societies like Lebanon or Malaysia are classified as heterogeneous ones with the population partitioned into distinct identity markers via loyalties shown to the rival regimes of truth. Societies like Iran, Russia, or Mexico are classified as troubled societies due to the fact that almost every person or collectivity in these societies has affirmative or negating divided loyalties to some degree to multiple regimes of truth. Many societies like Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and many others travel back and forth between these categories.

It is worth noting that in the troubled societies, each person or collectivity is divided internally, while in the heterogeneous societies, communities with distinct identities are divided from each other. Homogenous societies benefit from a form of institutionalized bee-like stability and predictability at micro, meso, and macro levels. In addition, societies like Somalia or Afghanistan are classified as failed societies due to the prevailing chaotic situation in which no centre of power, knowledge, or identity exists. In this study it is shown that the troubled societies like Iran suffer from the tragedy of confusion, which disrupts the link between the production of truth, trust, and wealth. This is demonstrated by applying these notions to various episodes of Iranian modern history. It is the nuanced claim of this work that current upheavals in Iran have deeper roots in the wars of attrition between multiple regimes of truth in the minds, hearts, and lifestyles of almost every single Iranian person and collectivity, leading to the formation of unstable coalitions, dysfunctional institutions, and the emergence of a chaotic order in the last 200 years.

As Selbin (2010) maintains, the possibility of progress in the historical analysis originates from two main sources: new data and new theory. For a collection of informative data about Iran, we can consult works like Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani (2018) and Milani (2008), among others, but we also need new theories. Based on an interdisciplinary research at the intersection of politics, economics, philosophy, and psychoanalysis, this work offers a novel grounded theory embarking on an alternative understanding of the Iranian modern history, and Iranianness and how it is experienced, practised, and perceived within and outside Iran, alongside exploring their unintended consequences. This work tries to combine the best of philosophical and theoretical reflections with scrupulous attentions paid to the empirical details. The way we think and talk about Iran, within Iran and outside of it, acts as a condition of possibility for much of its troubles in the last 200 years. There is, consequently, an urgent need to

think and talk afresh and differently about Iran with a great deal of care and considerations. We need to go through the painful process of defamiliarization and travel far beyond our comfort zones regarding Iran. As John Maynard Keynes (1936: xii) put it, "The difficulty lies, not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones, which ramify, for those brought up as most of us have been, into every corner of our minds." This study has travelled far and wide into the agony and ecstasy of the dangerous and fascinating terrains of Iranianness and invites the reader into this breath-taking voyage of discovery as well. The measured and nuanced conviction of this work is that for proper understanding of Iran, we require a radically different conceptual tool set and a novel vocabulary (on the role of vocabularies in shaping lives, see Rorty 1989). Regarding knowing Iran, we are, as Foucault (1984: 47) put it, "always in the position of beginning again". This work introduces this new vocabulary and demonstrates how it should be carefully and consistently deployed to explicate and explain the Iranian experiences of socio-economic development and political evolution in the last 200 years, depicting how Iranianness stayed the same through drastic changes and transformations.

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About the Book

This study entails a theoretical reading of the Iranian modern history and follows an interdisciplinary agenda at the intersection of philosophy, psychoanalysis, economics, and politics and intends to offer a novel framework for the analysis of socio-economic development in Iran in the modern era. A brief review of Iranian modern history from the Constitutional Revolution to the Oil Nationalization Movement, the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and the recent Reformist and Green Movements demonstrates that Iranian people travelled full circle. This historical experience of socio-economic development revolving around the bitter question of "why are we backward?" and its manifestation in perpetual socio-political instability and violence is the subject matter of this study. Foucault's conceived relation between the production of truth and production of wealth captures the essence of hypothesis offered in this study. Michel Foucault (1980: 93–94) maintains that "In the last analysis, we must produce truth as we must produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place." Based on a hybrid methodology combining hermeneutics of understanding and hermeneutics of suspicion, this study proposes that the failure to produce wealth has had particular roots in the failure in the production of truth and trust. At the heart of the proposed theoretical model is the following formula: the Iranian subject's confused preference structure culminates in the formation of unstable coalitions which in turn leads to institutional failure, creating a chaotic social order and a turbulent history as experienced by the Iranian nation in the modern era. As such, the society oscillates between the chaotic states of socio-political anarchy emanating from irreconcilable differences between and

within social assemblages and their affiliated hybrid forms of regimes of truth in the springs of freedom and repressive states of order in the winters of discontent. Each time, after the experience of chaos, the order is restored based on the emergence of a final arbiter (Iranian leviathan) as the evolved coping strategy for achieving conflict resolution. This highly volatile truth cycle produces the experience of socio-economic backwardness and violence. The explanatory power of the theoretical framework offered in the study exploring the relation between the production of truth, trust, and wealth is demonstrated via providing historical examples from strong events of Iranian modern history. The significant policy implications of the model are explored.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"Are we [puppets] made of wax ([aya] ma ra az mum sakhta-and)?"
he asked with a strain of self-contempt. "In this world
there are no human beings like us".
Nasir-al-Din Shah (Amanat 1997: 252)

Background

A brief review of the Iranian modern history demonstrates that at least three strong events (the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, the Oil Nationalization Movement (henceforth, the ONM), the Islamic Revolution of 1979) shaped the trends and patterns of socio-economic development and were associated with large-scale confrontations between the forces inside and outside the country, creating a history of instability, upheaval, and socio-political violence alongside generating large-scale restructuring of socio-economic institutions and unstoppable waves of migration.

Many commentators and observers appear to be puzzled by the seemingly unending and unpredictable waves of incessant turbulence in the Iranian society, never settling down in the form of a steady social order based on the establishment of a set of stable institutional arrangements and steady and predictable positions in terms of internal socio-economic policies and external foreign policies. The Iranian society seems to be in a state of perpetual flux and permanent turmoil. The sense of despair, disillusionment, and bewilderment appears to be equally shared between the Iranians and non-Iranians alike.

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Aims, Objectives and Questions

This study aims to explore, explicate, and critically analyse the enigma of bitter experience of socio-economic development in the modern history of Iran. In other words, this work purports to conduct a case study on the violent experience of socio-economic development in Iran by offering a novel model for the analysis of the Iranian enigma based on an interdisciplinary approach at the intersection of philosophy, psychoanalysis, economics, and politics. This study basically aims to develop a grounded theoretical model to be tailored to the social reality of contemporary Iran and to be specifically applied to the various events in the Iranian modern history to demonstrate its potency in explicating the root causes of the turbulent and violent experiences of socio-economic development.

Within the identified aims and objectives, the main question triggering this work is: "what are the root causes of the bitter experience of socio-economic underdevelopment and the problematic of wealth creation in the modern history of Iran?" Or simply put, why Iranians have been asking themselves the following question in the last 200 years: "why has Iran not joined the league of advanced economies?"

In our quest for answers, we noticed that the three aforementioned strong events of the modern Iranian history demonstrate various failed attempts to achieve sustainable socio-economic development and to incorporate modernity. Iranians, consequently, seem to have been asking themselves the following set of questions (see Tavakoli-Targhi 2001; Matin-Asgari 2004). Why does it seem that so many attempts to achieve sustainable levels of wealth creation, socio-political stability, and a thriving society happy in its own skin have not been successful? What was the set of discursive and non-discursive practices in currency and in circulation in these three situations on the issue of the roots of Iranian socio-economic ailments and what was deemed to be the way forward? What was the interplay of texts and contexts in the sense that which texts and in what exact forms were evoked to analyse the roots of the socio-economic malaise and how they were used to entice actions and to inform policies?

Do these three movements and revolutions represent a linear progression towards achieving a sustainable level of socio-economic development or do they manifest a chaotic history with no social destination and as such manifesting a cyclical voyage? How can we make judgement? What were the achievements and shortcomings of these three strong events? Can they tell us something about the patterns and trends repeating themselves

throughout the modern history of Iran or are Iranians facing different issues at different times and consequently must acknowledge that there are no unifying themes connecting them together? Is there any accumulation of knowledge on the past experiences or are the same experiences being reproduced in different shapes and forms?

The undoubtable fact of the Iranian modern history seems to revolve around the observation that Iranians have been severely unhappy, resentful, and discontent with their own modern history and with their own experiences of socio-economic development (Sani' al-Dowleh 1907/1984; Makarem Shirazi 1961; Mansouri-Zeyni and Sami 2014; Jafarian 2017). In the last 200 years, Iranians diagnosed their country as severely diseased (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001: 124), schizophrenic (Shayegan 1997; Tavakoli-Targhi 2009: 5), or in a state of historical decline or disintegration (Tabatabai 2001). Forough Farrokhzad, the influential Iranian poet, calls Iran "a shack full of death, depravity and absurdity" (Jafari 2005: 363–364). Katouzian (2010: 17) dubs Iran as 'the pick-axe society (*jame'eh-ye kolangi*)' and the Shah famously loved Iran but hated its people. Taqizadeh, one of the leading constitutionalists and modernist intellectuals of modern Iran, expressed his contempt for the people of Iran for their spinelessness (Katouzian 2012: 203). The books addressing the question of "why are we backward?" have been among the bestsellers in Iran (Matin-Asgari 2004), indicating the persistent criticality of the question of backwardness for the Iranian *dasein*. As such the last 200 years of Iranian experiences of socio-economic underdevelopment has been an issue for the Iranians and non-Iranians alike.

Iranians experienced the manifestations of this permanent crisis in the military defeats, political instability, economic stagnation, and the critical states of public services in health, education, transportation, bureaucracy, and national security (intelligence system, police, and army). Iran has been an earthquake nation geo-politically as Japan has been geo-physically. As a result, Iran has been mired in various forms of identity politics and its associated politics of resentment in the last two centuries. As Pieterse (2010: 132; see also Szirmai 2015: 10) puts it, this sense of backwardness is constituted by the two notions of "awareness of a technology and development gap with the west" and the "attempts to catch up". Even in the hypothetical case where we end up denying Iran's backwardness, we must address the question of how and why the Iranians so frequently in their modern history came to see themselves as backward.

As such, the main task of this research is to take the questions originating from their sense of resentment seriously and to explore them through the tools, concepts, and insights offered by hermeneutics of understanding (the art and science of listening to the historical actors) and hermeneutics of suspicion (causal analysis and complex system analysis to uncover the patterns and mechanisms emerging out of unintended consequences of the interactions between various social actors). In this study we come to show that the Iranians have cared for all three forms of Habermasian rationalities in the last 200 years. The development gap is part of 'the instrumental rationality', which needs to be complemented with concerns over 'the communicative rationality' (the sense of communal belonging) and 'the emancipative rationality' (spiritual development) as well (see the following chapters) alongside the concerns over how to harmonize them, which has instigated "the crisis of legitimacy" (Arjomand 1988; Bakhash 1995; Jahanbegloo 2010) for all forms of socio-political orders in the modern history of Iran.

Many commentators implicitly or explicitly maintain that Iranian people's questions and problems are basically the same as what they had been at the age of the Constitutional Revolution (*see* Ehteshami 2017; Jafarian 2017; Hunter 2014; Malek-Ahmadi 2003; Ajodani 2003, among others). Does this mean that Iranians are moving in a circular fashion and have travelled full circle during a century of bitter and violent social experimentations? If we define socio-economic development in terms of sustainability, that is, the concrete capacity of a society to repair and modernize itself in the face of cultural, social, and economic crises and shocks, and in its ability to establish stable institutions of conflict resolution away from perpetual violence, does Iranian experience meet these criteria or not?[1]

This research, hence, aims to develop and propose a theoretical model constituting persuasive responses for these fundamental questions. The rest of this chapter briefly maps the set of concepts deployed in the rest of this study.

[1] The research is a journey, and the journey starts with a set of questions and then proceeds to questioning the questions. This work tries to avoid all forms of essentialization and attributes the roots of the socio-economic crisis to the intersection of the two Malinowskian notions of 'context of culture' and 'context of situation', which is captured through the compound notion of belated inbetweenness. As such this research is a work in the art and science of contextualization. The motto of this work is "never essentialize and always contextualize" (although Spivak believes in a form of "strategic essentialism", see Nayar 2015: 141). The fact is that the main idea of this work revolves around establishing and applying the science of singularity, where we try to capture the singularity and uniqueness of social entities, events and experiences.

Conceptualizing the Problem: The Proposed Model

At the core of the proposed model in this study is the notion of tragedy of confusion emanating from the state of belated inbetweenness[2] with its associated confused preference structure. Iranians have been captivated by the three rival regimes of truth and identity markers of Islam, Persianism (the idea of pre-Islamic Iran), and the Western modernity. In the context of belatedness (being late to modernity and being in the state of catching-up[3]), these three regimes of truth were deployed by the social actors to design three projects of reverse social engineering, namely, Persianization (Iran geraee or *bastan-geraee*), Islamization (*Islam-geraee* or *Islami kardan*), and modernization (*tajaddod geraee*). These three projects of reverse social engineering have been adopted intermittently in different periods of the Iranian modern history to achieve urgent social transformations. Thus, the state of belatedness prompts the translation of the three regimes of truth into the three projects of reverse social engineering (on the notion of social engineering, see Popper 1961; Hayek 1952; Nozick 1974; Scott 1998; Andrews 2013; Easterly 2014).

The notion of belated inbetweenness strives to capture the plight of many troubled societies having been thrown in a state of glocalization (the incessant pull and push between forces of globalization and forces of localization) where they face one dominant global civilization/culture (modernity) setting the agenda on how the belated societies should be organized and being in perpetual conflict with many local cultures[4] or regimes of truth.[5] In the complex interplay between the state of inbetweenness and

[2] See Bhabha (1990a, b, 1994) and Shayegan (1997)/(2007). See also Garner (2007) for the notion of 'inbetween peoples' in the context of race relations, Dovale (2013) on the notion of inbetweenness in the Japanese context and Ghorashi (2003) on the application of this notion to the exiled Iranians. The next chapters will delve into this notion more extensively.

[3] See Seeburger (2016) and the literature cited there on the notion of belatedness and the literature in development economics and development studies on catching-up ideologies and leapfrogging (see Szirmai 2015; Chang 1994; Easterly 2007; Pieterse 2010, Abramovitz 1986, for example). The notion of belatedness will be explored more thoroughly in the next chapters.

[4] See Rajaee (2006) on the notion of 'one civilization, many cultures'.

[5] Modernity as a regime of truth has a local presence in various societies in the form of co-habiting with other regimes of truth such as Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Persianism, Confucianism, Shintoism, and so on. The two different types of presence of modernity (as a dominant civilization and as a specific regime of truth and its associated culture) should not be confused or conflated. We will see more on this later in the text.

the state of belatedness, it is almost impossible to form stable coalitions in any areas of life, work, and language to achieve the desired social transformations, which leads to Situational Impossibility Theorem, following Arrow's famous Impossibility Theorem (more on this in the text). This implies that the Iranian confused preference structure leads to the emergence of Iran as a country of unstable coalitions and alliances in macro, meso, and micro levels, which in turn leads to the persistent experience of institutional failure, defined as the inability to construct stable and functional institutions such as modern nation-state, or market economy based on property rights or any other stable forms of institutional arrangements. Consequently, Iran is turned into the country of institutional dysfunctionalities and deformities.

This in turn triggers the emergence of large- and small-scale social movements and revolutions culminating in the experience of constant waves of socio-political instability, where the society oscillates between the chaotic states of socio-political anarchy emanating from irreconcilable differences between and within social actors and assemblages in the springs of freedom and repressive states of order in the winters of discontent. In every round of the truth cycle, the order is restored based on the emergence of a final arbiter (an Iranian leviathan in coordination or in conflict with the international leviathans of liberal and illiberal types) as the evolved coping strategy for achieving conflict resolution. The end result in each of these projects of reverse social engineering, hence, seems to be successive periods of socio-economic upheavals, crises, and ailments manifested in the dysfunctional institutions, unstable coalitions, and reversible political regimes and public policies.

Theoretical Framework

Attempting to understand the experience of development in Iran led this study to an interdisciplinary approach involving different strands of literature at the intersection of philosophy, economics, psychoanalysis, and politics, organized in the form of political economy of truth, trust, and wealth, to make the hyper-complexity of the Iranian social reality intelligible. It is important to emphasize that this research was an experience in grounded theory (Akhavi 1998: 696). The theory construction was triggered by the initial questions and by the literature in various theoretical strands and by the literature on the Iranian modern history and the Iranian history in general embedded in the big history of the region and the world.

This double-hermeneutics interdisciplinary model was initially inspired by Williamson's (2000) work in situating the experience of development in four levels of analysis, starting from the level of prices and moving to the levels of governance, institutions, and mind. Exploring the mind and its preference structure leads us to viewing social phenomena as Deleuzian social assemblages[6] whose evolution is governed by three principles of embeddedness, emergence, and incommensurability.[7] These social assemblages and multitudes need to be studied through developing a hybrid methodology incorporating Ricoeur's two hermeneutics entailing causational analysis (Cartesian *cogito*), complexity-system analysis, and cultural psychoanalysis involving the art of listening to and articulating various forms of worlds of signification (Heideggerian *dasein*, Wittgensteinian forms of life, or Habermas' lifeworlds). In a sense, in analysing social phenomena we simultaneously face meaning associations, complex system associations, and causal associations, which need to be captured through a hybrid methodology combining three principles of embeddedness, emergence, and incommensurability to unearth distinct historically formed meaning dynamics interacting with each other to produce complex system dynamics and mechanisms involving causal relations.

Based on this combined approach, the subject matter of the study, the question of Iranian socio-economic underdevelopment, needs to be positioned in the wider context of the Iranian social order and its evolution in time. The research needs to identify the shared characteristics of the Iranian social order over time and its strong and weak events and how they correlate and co-evolve to generate the Iranian experience of socio-economic development. The research needs to move between the highest

[6] Based on the positions taken on ontological individualism and collectivism or methodological individualism and collectivism (Sawyer 2005), there is a long tradition of debates in the social sciences on whether the unit of analysis should be gene, meme, epigenetics, psyche, individual (such as homoeconomicus), group, network, variable, family, class, gender, race, ethnicity, community, village, society, generation, intersectionality, nation-state, empire, centre-periphery, world system, civilization, epoch, event, action, practice or experience (some of these units were deployed or discussed in the following studies: Sawyer 2005; Hegland 2013; Saleh 2013; Epstein 2015; Fathi 2017; Blau 2017, for instance). In this study we take the unit of analysis to be the Deleuzian notion of 'social assemblage' incorporating all of the above phenomena as its exemplars (see DeLanda 2006, 2016; Parr 2010).

[7] For the notion of embeddedness, see Swedberg (2015); for the notion of incommensurability, see Berlin (1990), MacIntyre (1988) and Kuhn (1962/1970); and for the notion of emergence, see Hayek (1967: 85, 92–94), Dawkins (1986), Sawyer (2005) and Epstein (2015), among others.

level of generality and abstractness and the lowest level of empirical reality and concreteness.

Social assemblages (all forms of social entities from experiences, to events, individuals, groups, etc.) are immersed in the interplay between finitude and infinitude (Foucault's analytic of finitude; see Flynn 2005) and are characterized, in this study, using the Lacanian-Zizekian formulation where each social order is a hybrid phenomenon and is constituted of the three orders of 'real', 'symbolic', and 'imaginary', incorporating the worlds of things, words, and images. Social assemblages and orders have negating and affirmative facets (more on this in the text). The movements in life, work, and language are organized in the assembled wholes called world of signification or regimes of truth[8] through the territorialized and deterritorialized movements in the real, the symbolic, and the imaginary dimensions of social assemblages. As such social assemblages are constituted of a 'symbolic-imaginary' regime of truth alongside an indefinable real at its heart.

In effect, social assemblages are known by their identifiable regime of truth and unknowable dimension of the real. To know a social assemblage (an event like the 1953 anti-Mosaddegh coup, an experience like being a political prisoner, a text like *Shahnameh*, or social actors such as Khomeini or the Shah, or the Mojahedin Khalgh Organization, or societies like Iran or South Korea), we have to know about the emergence and evolution of its organizing force of regime of truth and how it is frequently destabilized by the movements of the real beyond its scopes of control and intelligibility.

After completing the structure of theoretical model deployed for the study, the analysis of modern history of Iran must be entered upon. The experience of rebuilding a civilization as late as the Safavid era (1501–1723) demonstrates that the Iranian social order possessed the ability to adapt to its historical situation and even flourish up to that point of time (see Amanat 2017; Newman 2006, for example). However, something seems to have gone seriously wrong in Iran from the point of its encounter with modernity in the early years of the nineteenth century. Iran had managed to revive itself and even thrive into the Safavid Empire after the shocking defeat in the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 in the hands of the Ottomans but could not recover from the permanent state of disorientation and disarray after the devastating defeats in the Russo-Iranian and Anglo-Persian wars in the first half of the nineteenth century.

[8] For the notion of regime of truth, see Foucault (1984). We address this notion more thoroughly throughout this work.

The Iranian social order in its more than two millennia of history had gone through the frequent "cycles of decadence and renewal" (Zirinsky 1994: 44) whose general characteristics were described by Ibn Khaldun in the rise and fall of dynasties and social orders (Polk 2009: 58–63) or by Machiavelli's cyclical principle (Holler 2008: 424). However, this time the context seems to be entirely different. In this study, the essence of the new context is captured in the intersection between the two Malinowskian notions of 'context of culture' and 'context of situation' (Malinowski 1935: 73; Robins 1971: 44). The notion of context of culture was designed to capture the nature of historical embeddedness and rootedness of a social assemblage, while the notion of context of situation refers to the topological space of neighbourhood of social assemblages interacting with each other and vying for overcoming multiple forms of finitude via developing coping strategies to overcome the despotism of nature over man in the form of instrumental rationality, the despotism of man over man in the form of communicative rationality, and the terror of death in the form of emancipative rationality.

The new situation troubling the Iranian social order, in contradistinction with all other historical experiences of decline and revival in the past, is captured through the study of the interplay between the context of culture as manifested in the notion of inbetweenness and the context of situation as encapsulated in the notion of belatedness. The notion of inbetweenness refers to the state where Iranians have been equally attracted and repelled by the three regimes of truth (Islam, the Western modernity, and Persianism) constituting their historical embeddedness.

The state of inbetweenness, thus, represents the context in which alternative regimes of truth battle for the Iranians' allegiance and affiliation, and their love, commitment, and passion. These warring regimes of truth possess their own abundances and lacks and their own black and white books of records. Each offers something special to the Iranian *dasein* while lacking in other dimensions of the Iranian *dasein*'s desires and preferences. While modernity has offered elements of communicative and emancipative rationalities in its truth package, its true speciality is deemed to reside largely in the realm of instrumental rationality[9] (overcoming the despotism of nature

[9] For the three forms of rationality, see Habermas (1971). Here we have modified Habermas' emancipative rationality—what he dubs as "the emancipatory cognitive interest of rational reflection"—to incorporate the insights from the Terror Management Theory (Goldenberg et al. 2000; Burke et al. 2010) on the fear of death. See also Nusseibeh (2016), Azadpur (2011), and Walbridge (2010) for the story of reason in Islam.

through science, technology, and stable market economies). Islam's speciality has been largely focused on the emancipative rationality (liberation from the terror of death), while Persianism's strong point has been in offering the space for the communicative rationality (common linguistic and non-linguistic heritage engendering the sense of bonding and belonging to a community). As such the Iranian modern history seems to demonstrate that the Iranians cannot afford to commit themselves irreversibly to one package of truth at the expense of alienating the alternatives. They seem to desire to have them all in one harmonious whole. This characterizes the demand side of the market for truth in the modern history of Iran.

On the supply side of the market for truth, the task of synchronizing and harmonizing these seemingly incommensurable and mutually exclusive sets of truth packages is a monumental task of cosmic proportion. Consequently, the market for truth in Iran seems to have suffered from multiple forms of market failures. Iranian subjectivity and social order, as a result, appear to have fallen victim to the multi-dimensional heaviness of the burdens of judgement[10] and its associated tragedy of confusion, and as such suffer from discursive homelessness.

In the context of situation, the Iranians have found themselves trapped in the state of belatedness and catch-up model of development, emanating from the global, universal, and totalizing nature of modernity. The global triumph of modernity as a civilization endowed the pioneer countries with a sense of supremacy (happy consciousness or happy slave[11]) and the rest of the globe with the sense of backwardness and its associated emotional economy of the senses of inferiority (unhappy consciousness or unhappy slave) and resentment. This puts almost all belated communities in the position to embark on the act of reverse social engineering to fill the development gap in the level of progress.

Taqizadeh's (in)famous call for the wholesale Westernization of society (Tavakoli-Targhi 2002: 22) fully captures the spirit of the state of belatedness, forcing almost all movements and programmes of different persuasions to "set out to change the fabric of social life in Iran" (Milani 2011: 20). In summary, while the state of inbetweenness seems to have created the tragedy of confusion for the Iranian *dasein*, the state of belatedness appears to have subjected it to the brutal experiences of reverse social

[10] For the notion of "burdens of judgement", see Rawls (2005: 54–66) and for "Social Choice and Multicriterion Decision-Making", see Arrow and Raynaud (1986).

[11] For the notion of "happy slave", see Herzog (1989), for example.

engineering of different ideological stripes. The following observation made by Chakrabarty (2011: 165) captures how the sense of belatedness has been connected to the irresistible urge for social engineering:

> Alexander Gerschenkron, the reputed Harvard historian who wrote a book in the early 1960s, ***Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective***, saw the problem of Russian modernization through the prism of belatedness and the politics of having to 'catch up' with the more 'modern' nations. The Indian Prime Minister Nehru would often say after independence that India had to accomplish in decades what the Americans had achieved over a few hundred years.

The state of belatedness has corresponded with asking for the yields of socio-economic development to be achieved 'now', without any delay. As Chakrabarty (2011: 168) observes:

> What replaced the structure of the 'not yet' in their imagination was the horizon of the 'now'.

Predicaments of belatedness with its 'now' horizon, however, instigate disastrous attempts for social engineering with their associate brute political violence, entangled with being vessels for the emergence of the new.[12]

In effect, based on the experience of the state of inbetweenness and the historical presence of the three regimes of truth, as mentioned above, three projects of social transformation have emerged in Iran to cure the ailments associated with the state of belatedness. The three large projects of social engineering constituted of modernization, Persianization, and Islamization. Each project has attempted to assimilate the elements of the alternative projects under its own appellation, producing nine forms of subprojects (see the text) applied to various fields of life, work, and language.

[12] Szirmai (2015: 104) reports on the potential advantages of technological backwardness in being able to copy the technical advances from the pioneering countries without bearing the costs. This second-mover advantage applies to the societies like Japan whose social cohesion was largely undisturbed through the traumatic encounter with modernity. Otherwise, copying, as an example of social engineering, may prove to be dysfunctional, reversible and counterproductive due to the emergence of irreconcilable differences and schism within belated societies owing to lack of incremental experiences associated with the vanishing mediators and their associated sense of ownership, tacit knowledge and skilful comportment.

The Iranian modern history seems, hence, to have been a site of the rise and fall and re-emergence of these three regimes of truth and their associated projects and subprojects of reverse social engineering. This study strives to demonstrate that in the compound state of belated inbetweenness, the social order is the outcome of the interplay of forces, voices, and faces, where the three forces (regimes of truth) combine through application of the operations of addition and subtraction to engender hybrid voices, in turn, inhabiting each generation of faces. Voices, as a collection of cultural memes and associations, go viral and frequently migrate from one face to another.

This study, thus, tries to formulate the dynamism of their rise to prominence and their eventual fall only to remerge in new forms and how their interactions have shaped the Iranian experience of instability and chaotic development using four phases of tragedy of confusion, formation of unstable coalitions, emergence of dysfunctionalities and deformities in the social order due to the experience of institutional failure, and the ultimate emergence of a chaotic order.

The forces, voices, and faces operating in each period of the Iranian modern history are analysed in this study based on the accounts of the historical actors, deploying the three processes and principles at work in the birth and evolution of social phenomena (namely, embeddedness, emergence, and incommensurability) and mapping the constitutive registers of social assemblages and their affirmative and negative axes.

The reflexive methodology adopted in this research is based on a careful blend of 'hermeneutics of understanding' and 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Kearney 1996; Kogler 1996; Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982; Ricoeur 1981) to achieve the faithful understanding of alternative regimes of truth, their associated projects and subprojects of reverse social transformation and their associated hybrid voices and their inhabited faces, and how they all combine to give rise to strong and weak events of the Iranian modern history as unintended consequences. This study sets out to understand how Iranianness (the experience of being an Iranian) is formed, deformed, reformed, and transformed in the modern history of Iran in the dynamic interactions between the state of inbetweenness and the state of belatedness, ultimately producing the sense of resentment associated with being trapped in the state of backwardness frequently experienced by the Iranians in the modern history of Iran.

This study explores the Iranian situation where we are faced with a series of daunting questions in the interface between Islam, modernity,

and Persianism. The Iranian *dasein* is struck with the Kierkegaardian question of "how can we become Christian (Muslim) in a Christendom (Muslim order)?" (the question of religious reformation, how can we feel content and fulfilled with being a Muslim in the sense of living in the discursive land of Islam despite all the dark sides of the social experiences associated with living in the Muslim order selling itself as the republic of virtue?). We also encounter the question of "How can we become Persians in a Persian order?" (the question of reconstruction of the communal bonding in how we can become at ease with our Persian identity despite all the dark sides associated with the historical experience of being a Persian?). We simultaneously face the question of "How can we become modern in a modern order (with all its own dark sides)?"

This latter question refers to the question of how we can justify ourselves in adopting the modern identity, discursive and non-discursive practices, institutional arrangements, and lifestyles despite all the demonic experiences associated with modernity. In a sense, the overall question revolves around "how can we find redemption in our Islamic, Persian, and modern identities while each is under severe and sustained attacks from the alternative camps?" Here we are faced with debilitating arrays of internal and external conflicts in all sites of social interactions.

Each regime of truth and its associated project and subprojects of reverse social transformation attempts to attain monopolistic position in the production of truth about life, work, and language. As such, each regime of truth resorts to demonization of the other and glorification of the self. The process of idealization of one identity marker and demonization of the others is deeply unsettling and disconcerting for the Iranian *dasein* caring for all sides of the truth divide.

Here, the claim is that Iranian modern history seems to attest to the fact that we are not faced only with the need for religious reformation but reformations in the Persian and modern identities as well alongside the daunting task of achieving a dynamical harmony among them. This means that we cannot treat any of these three regimes of truth as a benchmark and a gold standard and ask the other two to adapt and adjust to its basic standards of truth, goodness, and beauty. Instead, what is required is a complex readjustment of each and every one to the other in a co-evolutionary dance of chaotic synchronization. Iranians strive to synchronize the alternative rationalities offering liberation from despotisms of nature, man, and death. In this 'context', the Iranian *dasein* suffers from discursive homelessness, as there is no legitimate combined regime of truth available to satisfy all of her truth demands.

It should be noted that confusion in the mind and chaos in the situation mutually reproduce and reinforce each other. As such, this work is an attempt in cultural psychoanalysis of the Iranian social order, as Shayegan (2012) encourages us to conduct.[13] The cardinal sin of any form of psychoanalysis, including the cultural one, is committing counter-transference in projecting the analyst's grid of intelligibility and analyst's relation of power and emotional economy on the social agents, their actions and emotions and their associated worlds of signification and their affiliated regimes of truth and accompanied dictionaries of denotations and connotations, and how they all unintentionally combine to produce tragic and traumatic episodes of the Iranian modern history.

Significance of the Study

The main contribution of the model proposed by this study is to offer a new in-depth, integrative, and interdisciplinary understanding of the experience of socio-economic development in the modern history of Iranian political economy. In doing this, however, this study avoids relying on out-of-shelf theories and devises its own theoretical framework to fit the social realities of the Iranian modern history. Ashraf (2007), Katouzian (2010), Rajaee (2007), Adib-Moghaddam (2013), and Dabashi (2016), amongst others, call for a new theoretical understanding of the familiar events of the Iranian history. This study, thus, strives to 'think outside the box', 'push thought to extreme', 'think the unthinkable', and 'de-familiarize the familiar' by drawing upon and at the same time breaking away from the traditional approaches to the analysis of the Iranian modern history. Theory and history have pushed this research into these new terrains; this is an attempt to put the theory in the service of understanding the concrete issues of the time and writing history of the present (see Mahbubani 1998; Mignolo 2011; Dabashi and Mignolo 2015; Ascione 2016).

It is expected that a potential objection may be raised to the broad nature of the questions identified by this study and the proposed model to address them; the rationales behind such a broad approach are as follows.

[13] See also Rashkin (2008) and Ross (1995) on the notion of cultural psychoanalysis and Parker (2008) on applying it to Japan and Parker and Siddiqui (2019) (forthcoming) on applying it to Islam, for instance.

Inevitable Generalizations Alongside Offering a Novel Conceptual Framework

In the current climate of war against diverse forms of terrorism and various types of division between good and evil, there are already so many unexamined generalizations floating around and in circulation about Iran with possible devastating implications for the lives of the Iranian people, the Middle East, and the whole world.[14] What this research aspires to do is to put these generalizations to the test of a very scrupulous and thorough analysis based on the reservoir of theoretical and historical resources.

Some of these generalizations, in random order, are as follows: the Iranian people are ready for an irreversible move towards democracy and market economy and a big push from outside can act as a catalyst and remove the irrational obstacles operating from within; the Iranian people are deeply religious and will never succumb to the outside pressures and will never lose their Islamic identity; the transformative change in Iran is imminent and only a minority of powerful groups with deeply entrenched vested interests are preventing it; the powerful outside invaders have always prevented Iran from achieving socio-economic development; we are heading towards a gradual and evolutionary but irreversible transformation in the Iranian nation and all the encouraging signs are evident and this process will bring its fruits if only the powerful outside forces could abstain from interfering in the internal evolution of the Iranian social order; the geographical position of Iran in a region with explosive combination of God, gun, and oil is at the root of its problems; the root of our problems is the historical tyranny and despotism experienced by the Iranian people generations after generations and has been deeply enshrined in all aspects of the Iranian world; the Iranians are suffering from an understanding of Islam deeply outdated and obsolete and the only way forward is to modernize the language and traditions of religious teachings and practices.

[14] See some of these generalizations, for example, in the following works and collections of essays on Iran: Vahabzadeh (2017), Chehabi et al. (2015), Mannani and Thompson (2015), Aghaie and Marashi (2014), Yaghoubian (2014), Stone (2014), Adib-Moghaddam (2013), Moazami (2013), Matin (2013), Saleh (2013), Elling (2013), Amanat and Vejdani (2012), Gheissari (2009), Atabaki (2012), Katouzian and Shahidi (2007), Jahanbegloo (2004, 2008), Keddie and Matthee (2002) and Foran (1994), among others. The deep and thorough engagement with the literature on Iran requires another independent space.

The main themes emerging in these discourses are as follows: the emphasis is placed on the detrimental and conspiratorial role of the powerful outsiders, which strives to send the message 'leave us alone and we will develop'; we ourselves are to blame with our addiction to despotism and our lack of democracy and rule of law; our region and neighbourhood is at the root of our historical malaise; we are suffering from lack of religious reformation and as such the traditional religion is at the root of our problems.

In the novel framework of this work, a systematic study of Iranian modern history is attempted to form an examined judgement on the enigma of the Iranian experience of violence and troubled development; it is used to vigorously probe the validity, potency, and relevance of the aforementioned set of claims and counterclaims. It is hoped that this analysis will trigger a paradigm shift in the understanding of what causes the bitter experience of the Iranian socio-economic development and Iran's history of socio-political violence.

In a sense, the point is that generalizations about the Iranian socio-economic experience are routine forms of speech acts and as such are facts of life in all circles and walks of life whether academic or non-academic; everyone smuggles their unexamined assumptions about the nature of Iranian society and its macro-level trends and directions into the analysis of any particular issue like irrigation, women's veiling, foreign policy, or unemployment. This study is an invitation to put these inevitable and unavoidable generalizations under the microscopic gaze of a historically informed interdisciplinary analysis and see how much of the current unexamined opinions will survive the test.

All social assemblages (individuals, groups, institutions, nation-states, global organizations, etc.) re-examine their foundations and embark on soul-searching and take a journey of self-discovery when they experience breakdowns[15] and encounter crises as in the example of the 2007–2008 financial crisis in the West where the axioms of the socio-economic system; educational, financial, and cultural institutions; and academic disciplines such as economics, social sciences, and philosophy are being frequently questioned and re-examined (Rodrik 2015; Kirman 2010; Stiglitz 2011;

[15] See Heidegger (1962: 63–64) for his famous 'hammer and door knob examples' and how the invisible background becomes visible in the breakdown experiences. See also MacIntyre (2006: 3–23) for the relevant notion of "epistemological crisis" and how to overcome it.

Sim 2010; Epstein 2015; Shiller 2017). Iran has been suffering from such societal crisis for more than a century and it is a natural reaction to examine the foundations of Iranianness under the rubric of the questions emanating from the state of belatedness.

The Examination of the Discourse of Change

For so many times in their history, the Iranians said to themselves that this time it is different, and every time it was not. The promise of a sustainable change has been with us for so long but no radical change, no irreversible breaking of the barriers of socio-economic progress, seems to have happened (for the latest version of such discourses, see Yaghmaian 2002; Mirsepassi 2011; Dabashi 2010; Sreberny and Torfeh 2013; Parsa 2016, among others). The Iranians seem to have embraced, resisted, ridiculed, and subverted all forms of social orders and experimented with all types of blueprints for change, but have never settled into any of them, waiting for the blueprint-to-come. They migrated from one discursive land to another in an endless process of nomadic movements (*yeelagh-gheshlagh*) and homelessness (*avaregee*). They welcomed and rejected the old and the new, the left and the right, the secular and the religious, the liberal and the authoritarian, the nationalist and the internationalist. Ahmad Shamlu (1925–2000) (2012), the renowned Iranian poet, addresses this problem in the following terms: "[third world] societies turn over in their sleep, thinking that they are moving forward". Adoption of a historical perspective may help us to question the validity of the unexamined axioms of change by putting together the missing parts of the historical jigsaw and by mapping the lived experience of Iranianness, followed by putting forward a whole set of prerequisites for a sustainable transformation to occur.

An Overview of Chapters

The study constitutes a theoretical framework incorporating the double-hermeneutics analysis alongside a country-specific theoretical model devised to make sense of Iranian history of bitter experience of development. Chapter 2 explores the theoretical and methodological resources and approaches adopted in this study for the analysis of socio-economic development in Iran. Chapter 3 develops the four-stage theoretical model of the evolution of the Iranian social order through tragedy of confusion, formation of unstable coalitions, institutional failure, and chaotic order

and delves into its theoretical and historical foundations. Chapter 4 investigates the components of the tragedy of confusion alongside the historical examples associated with it. Chapter 5 delves into the notion of unstable coalition as the second stage of the four-stage model and provides historical examples for it. Chapter 6 strives to articulate the parameters of the experience of institutional failures alongside offering a set of concrete historical examples. Chapter 7 examines the complexities and historical examples associated with the experience of living in a chaotic order. Chapter 8 concludes the study.

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CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The importance of institutions in the process of socio-economic development is being increasingly acknowledged in the literature on socio-economic development, liberalization, privatization, and the economics of emerging markets. Rodrik (2007), for instance, sees the market systems being embedded in five nonmarket institutions of property rights, regulations, macroeconomic stabilization, social insurance, and conflict resolution. The emergence of institutions is linked to the notion of social capital. With regard to the centrality of the notion of capital in development, the literature on development can be mapped on a conceptual space moving from natural capital, to physical and financial capital, human capital, and ultimately to social capital. The role of social capital and its main component, trust, is highlighted as the key prerequisite for the establishment of a stable institutional path towards sustainable socio-economic development (see Tilly 2005; Platteau and Peccoud 2010; Uslaner 2018, among others).

As a developing country, Iran has benefited from, for example, rich reservoirs of natural resources, strategic geographical positioning, almost uninterrupted stream of oil revenues, and reasonable amount of physical and human capital. Despite starting its leap for development with Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century, the gap in the level of development between the two countries could not be greater, largely due to constant socio-political instability (see Aisen and Veiga 2013) and intermittent episodes of small- and large-scale social upheavals experienced in Iran (Foran 1994; Azimi 2008).

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The history of modern Iran may be summarized in the phenomenon of institutional failure, namely, failure to construct stable and legitimate set of institutions required to achieve economic prosperity through establishing security, peace, and order. This research, hence, addresses and strives to make sense of the question of why Iranian nation in its repeated attempts to construct institutions of modern order failed so regularly and so consistently. The sense of failure is shared by almost all Iranians of various ideological persuasions (see Jafarian 2017; Ajodani 2008; Azimi 2003; Matin-Asgari 2004, among others). From the reform package adopted by Abbas Mirza after the defeats in the first round of Russo-Iranian wars (1804–1812) (Hunter 2005: 259) to the Green Movement in 2009 (Dabashi 2011; Adib-Moghaddam 2013) and the bread riots of 2018 (Gohardani and Tizro 2018), Iranians demonstrated their sense of failure and resentment through numerous speech acts, top-down reform movements, and bottom-up social movements and revolutions. If the questions on institutional failure are tracked back to the lack of social capital and trust in the Iranian society, the research question of this study addresses the problem of why the Iranian nation has not been able to generate adequate level of trust in the form of social capital in various sites and levels of socio-economic interactions to enable it to construct effective, efficient, and legitimate institutions necessary for achieving sustainable socio-economic development.

Social Capital, Institutions and Development

The literature on social capital (Knack and Keefer 1997; Fukuyama 2000; Putnam 2002; Christoforou and Davis 2014) points to the significance of trust in the construction of efficient institutional framework for socio-economic development.[1] As North (1990, 2005)[2] maintains, economic performance depends on stable institutions constituted from formal rules, informal customs and norms, and common belief systems, and their associated enforcement mechanisms (see Ostrom 2005, 2013). Institutions are hyper-complex entities entailing a system of written and unwritten rules and regulations (Guala 2016). Ostrom and Basurto (2011: 328), for instance, identify a set of seven rules including boundary rules, position rules, choice (allocation) rules, information rules, aggregation rules, payoff rules, and scope rules with regard to irrigation systems. By reducing

[1] For a critique of the concept of social capital, see Fine (2010).
[2] See Fafchamps (2017) for a revisited analysis of this literature.

uncertainty inherent in the socio-economic transactions, stable institutions, with their complex sets of components, reduce the transactions costs and remove the frictions in markets and hierarchies and pave the way for socio-economic take-off. In the same spirit, Rodrik (2007) sees the essence of sustainable development in the establishment of institutions of conflict resolution through the creative use of local knowledge. In the face of bounded rationality and inherent incompleteness of contracts, Williamson (2005, 2010) emphasizes on the role of informal norms and consensus and common legal and ethical cultures in minimizing the costs of conflict resolution.

In explaining all socio-economic phenomena, Williamson (2000) distinguishes four levels of analysis, namely, level of prices, level of governance, level of institutions, and level of mind, each of which functions at its own specific time scale with differential speed of change, spanning a spectrum from instant change in prices to a millennium required for the change in mindsets. At the level of prices, for example, the role of price signals in allocation of scarce resources in the markets is the focus of attention, while at the level of governance, the internal structure of power, ownership, and management and the incentive mechanisms in socio-economic organizations (hierarchies) such as corporations, schools, families, and bureaucracies are at the centre of gravity. At the level of institutions (such as property rights), the formal laws and informal rules defining and grounding the institutional structure of human activities are at the pinnacle of analysis, while at the level of mind, the internal structure of human mind with its conscious and unconscious components, its values, motivations, beliefs, and preferences is the focus of analysis. Overall, all these interactive systems produce the co-evolving complex system of political economies.

These four levels of analysis can be summarized as prices matter, governance matters, institutions matter, and mind matters. Removing price distortions and establishing proper governance structure may seem easy but arriving at right institutional structure or appropriate preference configurations appear as daunting tasks. As such, Dixit (2004) acknowledges that in many developing countries the institutions of rule of law cannot be established as prerequisite of socio-economic development, and as a result the state of lawlessness would be the default position in these national settings. He strives to develop a theory where the task of conflict resolution is achieved through private arrangements in the state of public lawlessness. As attested by Babu and Dev (2016: 3), Dixit (2016) applies his insights

to the supply and demand sides of corruption, for example, and suggests the adoption of economic sanctions within the business community to establish a 'no bribes' norm.

In acknowledging the lack of universal blueprints for constructing development-oriented institutions and in admitting to the specificity and uniqueness of the trajectory of emergence of them, Rodrik (2007: 24) states that the recent sustained rate of growth in China is achieved not through Western-style institutions guaranteeing the rule of law but through a set of remarkable institutional innovations enshrined in the distinctly Chinese arrangements of district and village ownership developed in the communist era. Many researchers of Far East countries such as Japan and South Korea (see Chang 1994; Wade 1990; Stiglitz 1996) view their processes of industrialization and modernization as an outcome of the close cooperation and negotiation among the political, military, bureaucratic, scientific, and business elites of these societies rather than the rule of law as formulated and implemented in Western countries. This body of research explicitly or implicitly strives to immunize the researchers against the epistemological diseases of Orientalism and Eurocentrism, Occidentalism, ethnocentrism, and tribalism and prompts us to search for country-specific model of socio-economic development away from various forms of a-culturalism and universalism inherent to most social and economic theories (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001; Taylor 2001; Chakrabarty 2000).[3]

Another strand of literature in socio-economic theory takes us to the direction, which results in the premise that 'history matters' (Tilly 2006). Arthur (2015) and David (1985, 2007) demonstrate that whenever increasing return to scale is at work in a context, the economy may get 'locked-in' an inefficient outcome purely because of a (even small) random event. As such, the phenomenon of 'path dependency' is the result of the work of increasing return to scale. It can therefore be argued that history in the form of random or traumatic events may determine the economic stagnation or progress of a specific country or region.

The stark conclusion emanating from this literature is that the existence and prevalence of path-dependent processes introduce 'history' into almost all forms of socio-economic analysis (even analysis of seemingly pure economic issues such as employment, inflation, economic growth,

[3] Orientalism and Eurocentrism are special cases of ethnocentrism, tribalism and self-centrism in the dynamics of self-other relations (see Taylor 2001: 192).

and the rise and fall of firms). David (1985: 332)[4] emphasizes on the importance of "historical accidents" in the economic analysis.

According to the literature on complex systems (Harrison 2006; Hooker 2011; Durlauf 2012; Arthur 2015; Rose and Shulman 2016), it is possible to identify some random events that disrupted the ongoing course of history, with irreversible consequences.

Due to the widespread prevalence of phenomenon of increasing return to scale and positive feedback mechanisms in the socio-economic systems (norms, beliefs, and discoveries are knowledge-based phenomena with strong tendency for spill-over effects and increasing return to scale), path dependency is prevalent in such entities (Arthur 2015). The notion of path dependency may lead to the transformation of the social sciences into sciences of historical evolution of social phenomena. It implies that Geertz's (1973) 'thick descriptions'—equivalent to Hirschman's (1984) 'against parsimony'—should complement the reductionist forms of thin descriptions (for instance, Solow's 'keep it simple'). This notion can be deployed, for example, to analyse the polarization of various kinds from the North-South divide in the international order to 'the tale of two cities' in New York or London or the prevalence of racial, ethnic, or gender divides in countries, regions, cities, or organizations. Pierson (2000, 2004) utilizes the concept of path dependency to analyse distinct trajectories of welfare states, Mahoney (2001) deploys it to explain the phenomenon of regime change in Central America, and Hedlund (2005) uses it to analyse the Russian troubled history. The notion of path dependency leads Hodgson (2001, 2004) to reject the universalism intrinsic to the mainstream economics and to argue that there is a need to have different theories to analyse different economic phenomena and systems, implying that historical contexts must be taken into account by recognizing the historically situated nature of economic phenomena (see also Hodgson and Knudsen 2010).

When we combine the two aforementioned strands, we reach the conclusion that based on five premises of 'prices matter', 'governance matters', 'institutions matter', 'mind matters',[5] and 'history matters', we can ven-

[4] See also Arthur 2015, Pierson 2000, Mahoney and Schensul 2006, David 2007.

[5] Even World Bank in its recent World Development Report (2015) entitled "Mind, Society, and Behavior" acknowledges the significance of mind in the process of development and the need for an interdisciplinary understanding of the process of development, but their treatment of the subjects alongside the literature on social capital is highly undertheorized.

ture into the historical analysis of the country-specific roots of socio-economic underdevelopment, utilizing an interdisciplinary approach, fully taking advantage of theories in philosophy, psychoanalysis (such as the vast socio-economic and political readings of Freud, Lacan, and Zizek),[6] economics and politics.

Thus, construction of a logic is possible, whereby evolution and history embed and shape the embodied minds which overflow into institutions, governance structures, and price mechanisms. The basic point is that the historical functioning of the economic system through the signalling role of prices at the international and national levels generates opportunities for national, regional, and local economies to initiate their process of development by activating their static comparative advantages (whether this comparative advantage is in natural resources, cheap labour, geographical positioning as a hub, tourism, or any other component) and to start their processes of rapid growth and use the yields and surpluses of growth to generate sustainable socio-economic development through engendering dynamic comparative advantages in higher value-added and knowledge-based sectors and products with increasing return to scale (Thurow 1993). The whole process, however, requires coordination between all those four Williamsonian levels of mind, institutions, governance, and prices. For the smooth functioning of the signalling effects of prices in the markets, you need corrupt-free and fair governance structures, functioning institutions providing stability and security, and dissonance-free minds without constant preference reversals and time inconsistencies. For markets to function, we need the whole society as a complex system to work.

In a sense, sustainable socio-economic development is a process of generating surpluses and accumulation of wealth by moving from static comparative advantages to dynamic comparative advantages, but the whole process requires a level of dynamic cohesiveness achieved through the

[6] We may need to remember that Freud himself started from the exploration of psyches and dreams but ended up analysing everyday life, religions and civilizations (see Pick 2012; Billig 1995, 1999; Parker 2008 among others). Post 9/11, the literature of trauma studies (Buelens et al. 2014) has fully reactivated the deep and thorough engagement of Freud and psychoanalysis with the socio-political analysis of "haunting legacies, violent histories, and transgenerational trauma" (Schwab 2010), and intercultural encounters, mega civilizational and global events, patterns and trends (Schwab 2012; Alexander et al. 2004). This literature indicates that 'trauma matters' following from 'history matters' (see Chap. 3 for more details).

dance of co-evolution, multilateral harmonization, and institutional complementarities achieved through an evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization (Mosekilde et al. 2002; Foster and Hölzl 2004; Hodgson 2013) between those four aforementioned levels, which by implication involves the functioning of the whole social order within a particular social formation. That is why we require a set of methodologies and theoretical frameworks enabling us to study social orders in their wholeness (the dynamic movements between those four levels) and in their uniqueness, specificity, and contingency referring to case-specific and path-dependent analysis beyond almost all forms of content universalism.

Depending on the nature of social orders, the process of chaotic synchronization of four levels of social assemblages may fundamentally succeed, resulting in the creation of homogenous societies like the Western countries and Japan, or it may produce heterogeneous and highly stratified societies like Lebanon or Malaysia with relatively stable consensual system of division of power (Malaysia much more than Lebanon), or may partially succeed, which produce troubled social orders like Iran, Mexico, Pakistan, and Russia, or may totally fail, which engenders failing social orders as in Somalia or Afghanistan. There are also classes of countries that have been in transition from one category to another such as China and India, or Turkey moving from the state of trouble to a state of homogeneity and back, or countries like Yemen, Iraq, or Syria, which may or may not move towards becoming failed states. Of course, even homogenous Western countries frequently experience cognitive dissonance on a pocket of issues such as taxation, war on drugs, prostitution, or migration. The positions of most Western societies on drugs, prostitution, taxation, and migration and their supply and demand sides are schizophrenic (compare them with the supply and demand of alcohol and cigarette and the new consensus built on smoking); what is different in Iran is that this schizophrenia (Shayegan 1997) extends to the whole social order, covering almost every small or big issue of life, work, and language. Due to the dynamical relations within and between regimes of truth, a society (like America or the Roman Empire) can move from the homogenous state to be a 'failed state'.

Based on the stability and intensity of social cohesion and avoidance of 'regime uncertainty' (Higgs 1987), hence, there are four types of societies: homogenous, heterogeneous, troubled, and failed. Regarding its experience of the last 200 years, Iran seems to belong to the troubled category with its dysfunctional process of institutionalization while having

the traces of the other three in its structure as well. This is a typological analysis, but as we mentioned elsewhere in this study, the typological and axiomatic analyses need to be accompanied with the topological ones (see Tizro 2012; Flynn 2005; Harris 1987), which we embark on throughout this study. Based on Hodgson's verdict, which is reiterated in the World Bank reports on development (2005, 2015), different economic phenomena require different theories, where historical contexts and local knowledge (Rodrik 2007; Easterly 2001, 2007a, b, 2014; Kalb 2006) could be incorporated in the analysis.

Wider Theoretical Resources

Borrowing from different strands of theoretical literature in economics and beyond, this study attempts to develop a unique theory for the analysis of Iranian experience of socio-economic underdevelopment and to apply it to various major events and periods in the Iranian modern history to demonstrate its potency in explaining the patterns and regularities inhibiting socio-economic development and creating socio-economic crises and turmoil. The philosophical dimension of the work triggered by the investigation in the structure of mind borrows from the binary opposition of Heideggerian *dasein* (Heideggerian term for human existence as being-in-the-world) versus Cartesian *cogito*, or Heideggerian existential phenomenology as opposed to Cartesian subject-object relation (Dreyfus and Taylor 2015; Schear 2013; Dreyfus 1991).

In a sense, this study has been set up to demonstrate that Rodrik's (2007, 2015) emphasis on local knowledge in designing country-specific recipes for economic development and Williamson's diagnosis of 'mind matters' in determining the economic destiny of a nation inevitably take us to the deep waters and uncharted territories of philosophical, psychoanalytic, and other interdisciplinary theories never fathomed by these economic theorists. To explore the structure of the mind and how it affects development, as implied by Williamson (2000), we need to explore what constitutes and differentiates the Japanese mind from the Iranian mind, and this takes us to their distinct backgrounds, which Heidegger calls *dasein*. In this study the Iranian background (*dasein*) is characterized by the two notions of belatedness (being thrown in the state of catching-up) and inbetweenness (being embedded in the state of warring regimes of truth). We listen to the various Iranian minds like the Shah, Khomeini, or Mojahedin through the cultural psychoanalysis involving hermeneutics of

understanding and free association. And we study the unintended consequences of their interactions (like Islamic Revolution or Banisadr's impeachment or hostage crisis or Iran-Iraq War) through hermeneutics of suspicion entailing causal analysis (Cartesian *cogito*) and complexity system analysis. In a sense, every social assemblage like Iranian economy in its vertical and horizontal movements possesses three levels of causational, system-based, and meaning-centred dynamisms captured by three strands of social analyses based on reductionism, complexity systems, and cultural psychoanalysis mapping different worlds of significations.

In the ontological and methodological analysis undertaken by this study, the Heideggerian being-in-the-world is characterized by the Lacanian trinity of 'the symbolic', 'the imaginary', and 'the real' orders. Furthermore, the Foucauldian articulation of power, knowledge, and subjectivity (Flynn 2005) is deployed to characterize the affirmative dimensions of a symbolic order. In addition, Deleuzian process philosophy (DeLanda 2006, 2016) is deployed to elaborate on affirmative dimension of 'the real' and Castoriadis' theory is adopted and adapted to theorize the affirmative dimension of 'the imaginary'. Zizek (1989, 2012) interpretation of Lacan (based on negating dimensions of disruption, foreclosure, repression and disavowal, and ideology and fantasy) is used to characterize the negating dimensions of 'the real', 'the symbolic', and 'the imaginary' as embedded and embodied in various forms of being-in-the-world and their associated social assemblages (see Appendix 1 for a diagram of this structure).

A Brief Exposition of Methodological Resources: Double-Hermeneutics Methodology

The aim of this section is to briefly outline the methodological insights, heuristics, and tools[7] necessary for the analysis of our research questions and the subject matter of our historical case studies and its associated empirical data covering the strong and weak events of modern history of Iran. We draw upon a wide variety of intellectual resources in order "to break with forms of knowledge which, to be validated, relied on the 'obviousness' of immediate experience" (Lechte 1994: 41). In this sense we do not take the question of "Why are we backward?" as self-evident and obvious; rather, we question the condition of possibility of such a question

[7] A thorough treatment of the methodology of research will be elaborated in the forthcoming book on the logic of social inquiry.

arising in the first place. The time of socio-economic crisis for the latecomers is the time of trauma and reflection, and the time of reflection is the time of questioning the questions, problematizing our problematization (seeing the way we see something as a problem), and thinking the thinking itself as Derrida (1983: 19) and Rorty (1979: xiii) maintain. From the question of "why are we backward?", we move to the deeper levels of "why do we see ourselves as backward?" and then "how do we think about things of this world?" and "why do we think the way we do?" Deleuze, as reported by Colebrook (2009: 9), guides us in the same direction when he states:

> [O]ne ought not to accept any already given and actualised form but should ask how such a form emerged, what that emergence can tell us about the life from which any actuality has taken shape, and how such a life—beyond its already created possibilities—might yield other potentials. History, then, should not take the terms already given, such as man, subjectivity, the polis, the speaking subject or the family, as its point of departure. Rather, history needs to account for the genesis of the subject.

As such, we need to explore the genesis of the question of backwardness. In a sense, as Zizek (2011) puts it, "the way we perceive the problem can be itself part of the problem. … There are not only wrong answers there are also wrong questions". Chakrabarty (2000: 93) gives us the sense of enormity of the task of questioning our addicted modern scheme of conceptualization in the study of experience of different countries like India. As such we will explore why and how the issue of development and its associated sense of backwardness became a problem for the Iranian society and history.

Two Ways of Analysing Social Phenomena

Our ontology and epistemology define our methodology. To question our questions as well as to delve into the nature of our crisis, we are faced with the binary opposition of Heidegger versus Descartes and *dasein* versus *cogito*. As *daseins* we are deemed to be relational beings, while as *cogito* we are conceptualized as god-like autonomous beings. *Dasein* is characterized by its being rooted in a particular time and place encapsulated in a particular world with a particular history. Blundell (2010: 37) captures the insights of Ricoeur and Gadamer in this regard:

> As Ricoeur puts it: "History precedes me and outstrips my reflection; I belong to history before belonging to myself. The emphasis that runs through Gadamer's hermeneutics is on this "belonging-to" (*Zugehörigkeit*) and "dependence-on" (*Abhängigkeit*) that is fundamental to all experience.

This means that belonging and dependence are primordial. *Dasein*[8] is being-in-the-world (Japanese being, Black American being, Chinese being, Iranian being, Iranian being from the north, etc.), while *cogito* is a universal being abstracted from all specificities of space and time, temporality and locality, history and geography.

Ultimately within the framework offered by *dasein*, we frequently see ourselves and act as *cogito*. Our historical background forms our consciousness. As Nietzsche put it, consciousness is a reactionary force (Katsafanas 2005; Lorraine 1999: 152), indicating that it is the product a particular background. *Dasein* as the collective and shared background becomes invisible and unconscious and *cogito* serves as our consciousness and as the tip of the iceberg of our being as a social assemblage. As composite beings, all of instantiations of being from experiences to events, processes, individuals, groups, associations, organizations, and societies are assembled out of corporal and virtual components. Only in our encounter with the radical other, parts of our background become visible and we are able to see ourselves woven into and out of our contingent embeddedness.

In this work we take our unit of analysis to be social assemblage, the process, and product of fitting heterogeneous components together (DeLanda 2006, 2016). In our endeavour to characterize social assemblages, we note that almost every encounter with the things of this world (like rain, oil reserves, revolution, sex, death, or encounter with a stranger) is a play of immediacy and mediation (Hegel 2010: 47–48; Houlgate

[8] As Bass (2006: 39) suggests, "Subject and object are metaphysical illusions synonymous with the privilege of consciousness". Bass (2006: 78) maintains that *dasein* "is not a subject which is then brought into relation with objects but only exists as being-with". *Dasein* is always outside of itself while *cogito* is self-contained and sovereign. The "motherbaby matrix" (Bass 2006: 112) and agent-environment interaction in situated robotics (Sawyer 2005: 50) are powerful images of the networked and assembled nature of *dasein*. *Cogito* takes the disembedded 'God's eye view' or 'the view from nowhere'.

1999: 42–43; Boothby 1991, 2001),[9] where something affects or is being affected by something else. The immediate encounter with this something is mediated through the webs of signification and imagination, which are almost always 'there' in advance ('mediated immediacy'), to name and determine the wh-questions associated with "their powers to affect and be affected" (Lorraine 2010: 147). The thingness of things is determined in this dynamic interplay between immediacy and mediation.

Sign System, Language and World of Signification

As such any encounter with the virtual or corporeal things of this world entails three elements of the signifier, the signified, and the reference which incorporates Peircean and Sausserian semiotics in the analysis of process of meaning production involving metaphor and metonymy (Chandler 2007; Geary 2011). Language itself is metaphoric and metonymic as the word and/or image replaces the thing and the word/image is a piece of the real replacing larger pieces of the real. As Lacan reminds us, the word murders the thing (Zizek 1989/2008: 131). For Barthes (1981: 15, 91), the image slays the thing, wherein the photograph is a "stasis of an arrest". The word "rain" with its denotations and connotations (the symbolic order) and its associated images (the imaginary order) replaces the rain itself (the order of the real). With the emergence of language, the signifier "rain" and its associated chain of significations and imaginations can never capture the rain, whatever it is, and can never be the rain itself, as Sepehri (1976/2010) longs for. A world of signification and a house of being are built around the rain itself, but the gap between the two worlds (the world of thing in itself, and the world of words, actions, and images) originates from the movements within and from the real but is the sign of the finitude of man and his vulnerability to the force of the real.

The process of signification is holistic and context-dependent as Frege and Wittgenstein remind us (Taylor 2016: 173–174; Gier 1981: 205) and involves the quilting points and the master signifiers as Lacan teaches us (Zizek 2006: 37, 307–308) or 'forms of life' as Wittgenstein shows us (Gier 1981: 18). This philosophical understanding has been reinforced by

[9] Importantly, the approximate equivalence in the Islamic philosophy seems to be *ilm huduri* (presential knowledge) and *ilm husuli* (acquired knowledge) (Moris 2012: 27–28; Nasr 1996; Hairi Yazdi 1992).

"the recent consensus in cognitive science (including AI) that behaviour can only be understood when viewed systemically, i.e., as a component in a larger system or assemblage" (Hansen 2000: paragraph 6). Heidegger opened our eyes to the fact that everyday existence is a form of understanding and attunement with the world, through which he extended the notion of understanding from the interpretation of texts into all human activities, in the sense that in everyday life in all fields of experience and in all forms of behaviour we are, consciously or (overwhelmingly) unconsciously, engaged in the act of interpretation, understanding, unconcealment, or disclosure. As Hoy (1993: 182) states:

> Contrary to present tendencies to think of the reading of texts as the paradigm case of interpretation, Heidegger's paradigm cases are everyday activities like opening a door or hammering. Even Heidegger's philosophical Interpretation is an interpretation not of a text, but of Dasein. … Seeing is not simply perceiving the properties of external objects with the bodily eyes …. Heidegger construes seeing as already interpreting something *as* something (e.g., seeing something as a hammer, as a door, or as a table).

For Heidegger action or more generally any form of behaviour is a particular form of interpretation of the world. Hoy (1993: 183) further elaborates on the holistic nature of understanding: "Meaning for Heidegger thus involves the holistic way in which something can become intelligible as something in a web of relations".

Emergence of Regimes of Truth

As such, the evolution of signs and linguistic systems leads to the emergence of quilting points, as meaningful wholes, which in the terminology of Foucault (1984: 73) are called "regimes of truth". This means that to understand a thing, we must understand a word (and its associated images), and to understand a word, we must understand a sentence, and to understand a sentence, we have to understand a language, and to understand a language, we have to understand its emergent regime(s) of truth. Regimes of truth—as the Lacanian 'big Other'—are deeply embodied and embedded in everydayness of existence and are largely unconscious and tell us "the truth about" life, work, and language and define what is sayable or unsayable (discursive formations), what is sense and nonsense, what is legitimate, what is beautiful, and what is true. After the

emergence of language and its associated social assemblages and regimes of truth, every manifestation of life (thingness of things, organization of objects, age, gender, sexuality, class, nationality, development, etc.) is named, mediated, and filtered through regimes of truth (messy embedded and embodied systems of meanings).

Regime of Truth, Culture, Civilization, and Empire

In this work the notion of culture is deployed as a wider concept incorporating all legitimate and illegitimate forms of discursive and non-discursive practices permeating a language community (Manganaro 2002; Rodgers et al. 2014). In regimes of truth, we have typology and axiomatization like Islam, modernity, or Hinduism, while in culture we have topological movements and entities and practices crisscrossing and living side by side like Christianity mixing with Buddhism or partying mingling with praying. The notion of civilization is used as an institutionalized form of culture and regime of truth, and empires are deemed as forms of civilization with their claims to exceptionalism and expansionism dominating diverse forms of language communities through their soft and hard powers (see Lincoln 2007; Munkler 2007; Hardt and Negri 2001). What Malinowski defines as context of culture refers to how cultures and regimes of truth work as historical a priori and condition of possibility for actions, emotions, and thoughts. And what he defines as context of situation refers to how the space and place is populated by a network of regimes of truth, cultures, civilizations, and empires being affected by and affecting each other due to 'analytic of finitude' (Howarth 2010: 21) and bounded rationality (Gigerenzer and Selten 2002).

It is worth emphasizing that our methodological approach in this work is not based on civilizational analysis, but analysis drawing upon the notion of regimes of truth and their interactions. This is due to the fact that in the state of belated inbetweenness, social assemblages are faced with a lack of stable institutional background and are divided between alternative regimes of truth and their associated, real or imagined, civilizational forms. Social assemblages are not cohesive entities in pursuit of materializing the ideals of one particular civilization; instead they desire to bring together different components of various regimes of truth and their associated civilizational forms. In the language of Fanon (Bhabha 1988: 19), they are trapped in "the zone of occult instability". As such, in this work, the notions of civilization, empire, and culture are deployed within the framework offered by the notion of regime of truth.

Difference Within and Between Regimes of Truth

As we indicated before, for knowing the Iranian mind, we have to know its regimes of truth. Regimes of truth almost immediately self-divide into orthodoxy and non-orthodoxy due to their finitude. In the case of encountering alternative regimes of truth in the context of situation, as they are not infinite and cannot fill the whole space-time spectrum, they have to either subsume rival regimes of truth under their own appellations or treat them as substitutes and try to annihilate them or see the relation as a case of complementarity and not substitution. This leads to the emergence of radical and pragmatic divisions within each regime of truth. Pragmatists try to incorporate the rival regimes of truth in their own affiliated regime of truth, while the radicals try to preserve the assumed purity of their beloved regime of truth. Due to the unique background of each social assemblage, different groups and individuals take either radical or pragmatic positions regarding the radical other. Here purity and impurity are at stake. This divides the regime of truth into orthodoxy and non-orthodoxy (heresy), majority and minority, pragmatism and radicalism. The non-majority orientation divides itself further into new forms of orthodoxy and non-orthodoxy. A new orthodoxy (majority-minority divide) emerges in any field of non-orthodoxy based on the work of the same operation.

We have another divide in terms of politics of piety (Mahmood 2005; Rothenberg 2010), or high culture, and politics of ordinary (Cavell 1988), or low culture. This is due to the fact that the default position for man, as an outcome of evolution and as an Aristotelian rational animal, as an "animal possessing language" (Taylor 2016: 338), is being an animal in pursuit of self-interests to overcome the despotism of nature. Regimes of truth emerged to modify and extend the instrumental rationality to the realm of communicative rationality to overcome the despotism of man over man and then to the zone of emancipative rationality to overcome the despotism of death over man. The evolutionary emergence of these three rationalities creates a potential conflict between the logic of self-interest with the logic of integrity, care, gift, and love.[10] To overcome this potential conflict, the two evolutionary patterns of politics of ordinary and politics of piety have emerged. In the politics of ordinary, social assemblages (individuals, groups, organizations, nations) adopt and adhere to the care, gift,

[10] For the logic of self-interest, see Dawkins (1976) and Levitt and Dubner (2006); for the logic of integrity, care, gift and love, see Fukuyama (2018), Sandel (2012), Mauss (1990), Becker (1973) and Freud (1922), among others.

and love dimensions of regimes of truth in form, while in content the same spirit of animality (pursuit of self-interest) is paramount. This coping strategy allows them to instrumentalize the logic of care, gift, and love and to have apparently the best of both worlds, while in the politics of piety, the dedication to the regime of truth is almost total and manifest itself thoughtfully and/or practically in honest adhering to the logic of care, gift, and love. This is reflected in Islam in the divisions between *fiqh*, philosophy, and mysticism, which has equivalent in every other regime of truth.

As such, piety and purity alongside level and type of rationality divides regimes of truth. Furthermore, they are divided in terms of records, regarding the gap between theory and practice, into black books and white books. There are black and white books of communism, liberalism, Shia Islam, Sunni Islam, and various forms of Persianism, for example. Despite all these divisions and differences, there are family resemblances (Wittgenstein 1953/2009: 67–77; see also Fink 1997: 93 and Schmid et al. 2008) between various divisions within regimes of truth, social assemblages, and *daseins*. Shia and Sunni branches of Islam, for instance, have family resemblances in terms of being related to the narratives of the divine revelation to the Prophet Mohammad in Mecca and Medina, while Islam itself has family resemblances to Christianity in terms of being associated with the Abrahamic faith and with Hinduism in terms of being a religion and so forth. These family resemblances are created due to the Deleuzian process of unicity evolving into unities and differences via affecting and being affected and/or territorialization and deterritorialization (see Parr 2010).

Characterization of Regimes of Truth

Based on what was discussed previously, we can say that the DNA of any social assemblage (the Shah, Khomeini, or Mojahedin) is its associated regime(s) of truth (Bryant 2011). This is why we will characterize social assemblages using the three Lacanian registers of real, symbolic, and imaginary (or topological, typological, and axiomatic as Foucault maintains (see Flynn 2005), or line of flight, molecular line, and molar line in the language of Deleuze and Guattari (1987)) and its internal divisions into nine forms (Zizek 2001). As Stavrakakis (1999: 6) puts it,

> the orders of 'imaginary', 'symbolic' and 'real' are the three most important categories, or registers, through which Lacan maps human experience.

Each register possesses affirmative and negating dimensions.[11] Following Foucault's works (Flynn 2005), the affirmative dimension of symbolic is characterized by the genealogy of power (panoptical observation, examination, normalization, inclusion-exclusion, mechanisms of reward and punishment, governmentality), archaeology of knowledge (statements, discursive formations, discursive practices, narratives, archives, epistemes), and problematization of subjectivity (emotional economy, subjectivation, passive and active agency). The negating dimension of symbolic order constitutes repression, disavowal, and foreclosure (unknown unknown). This shows the presence of elements of psychosis, neurosis, and perversion in any social order (see Zizek 2012; Stavrakakis 2007). The negating dimension of imaginary consists of fantasy, ideology, and myth. Through this process, identity, oneness, unity, and selfhood are attributed to difference, multitude, and multiplicity. Imaginary dimension produces a unified whole out of a multiplicity.[12] Each social assemblage (an organism, a person, an organization, a nation, an event, etc.) is part of a bigger whole and itself is a biological and cultural ecosystem, and the

[11] As Inwood (1992: 14) attests, "Hegel endorsed Spinoza's dictum 'determination is negation'". See Inwood (1992) on a wide range of meanings associated with negation and affirmation; see also Ogden (1994: 20–21), Brassier (2007) and Hurd (2010), among others.

[12] As Badiou, cited in Brassier (2007: 97), attests "the reign of the multiple is, without exception, the groundless ground of what is presented; that the One is merely the result of transitory Operations". That transitory operation is the operation of unification and is the work of the imaginary. As Morag (2012: 136) puts it: "Instead of accepting 'one' as an existing unit into his metaphysics, Badiou admits operation of unification. Every individual object is counted-as-one but is not intrinsically one. In other words, every object or entity is retroactively understood as composed of many, as a result of the operation 'count-as-one'." Taking the transcendental inquiry to its logical conclusion, as Surin (2010: 161) reports, we arrive at Deleuze's plane of immanence: "Deleuze is emphatic that abstractions explain nothing, but rather are themselves in need of explanation. … So in place of universals we have processes of universalisation; in place of subjects and objects we have subjectification and objectification; in place of unities we have unification; in place of the multiple we have multiplication; and so on. These processes take place on the plane of immanence, since experimentation can only take place immanently".

The question of why we think and behave the way we do takes us far back to the plane of immanence. This view of the relation between multiplicity and unity, transcendence and immanence, can be reconciled with Mulla Sadra's two descending and ascending arcs (Nasr 1996: 1150); the theory of two arcs alongside postmodern theories of difference seem to be able to go a long way into solving the thorny issue of unity and multiplicity, transcendence and immanence. Understanding social phenomena, including the Iranian experience of underdevelopment, requires delving deeply into these philosophical issues.

sense of unity is generated by the work of the imaginary. The wall of identity is created by the imaginary while we face the bridges of connectivity in all realms of real and symbolic (see Appendix 1 for a diagram on the logic of social inquiry). Ultimately, there is an interwoven whole (the real, the Being of beings), and multiplicity (the symbolic order) and unity (the imaginary order) are different manifestations of it (Haynes 2012). The great chain of being generates chains of symbolic and imaginary beings to express itself. The undifferentiated unicity of the whole (the real) gives rise to the differentiated sets of the one and the many.

The need for fantasy and myth and ideology is triggered by the gap between the real and the symbolic which can never be filled (Zizek 2007) and is explored either in a non-totalizing fashion through the affirmative work of imagination (the leap of imagination in the creative process) or through negating dimensions of imagination through closure via fantasy, myth, and ideology; the root of the problem is the gap between signifier 'rain' and the 'real' rain. The negating facet of the imaginary produces the illusions of completeness and autonomy. The affirmative dimension of the imaginary includes creativity, habit formation, and tacit knowledge (skilful comportment). The affirmative dimension of the real is composed of 'expression' and 'content' (Patton 2000: 44), each having vertical and horizontal movements, creating territorialization and re-territorialization in their rhizomatic and arborescent (tree-like) movements. The negating dimension of the real manifests itself in the creative destruction of emergent events with their nature as unintended consequences of networks of actions and interactions and outcome of rhizomatic movements of de-territorialization.

The register of the real, again in its Lacanian conception, is what generates destructive pulses into the symbolic and shakes and disrupts the web of symbolic and its protective belt of the imaginary closure through traumatic and unexpected events, big or small, which creates and/or unravels the holes, cracks and ruptures in the entire architecture of the symbolic/imaginary wholes. Any social order or social assemblage is basically a whole of holes and everyday life is a hall of wholes of holes (see Burt 2004). The emergence of the symbolic order marks the end of unity with the undifferentiated abundance and infinitude of the real. While the symbolic is the realm of differentiation and lack, the real is the undifferentiated realm of "lack of lack" (Stavrakakis 2007: 74; Fink 1997: 177) or abundance (see Connolly 2008a: 133; Tønder and Thomassen 2005). The emergence of the symbolic is, thus, equivalent to the event of the Fall from unconscious

attachment and blissful unity with the realm of the real and separation from the unity with the mother. Due to the nature of the act of signification, the symbolic brings an abyssal gap and a sense of incompleteness and lack, which is filled differently by the negating and affirmative dimensions of the imaginary.

It is worth emphasizing that the negating facet of the imaginary includes ideology and fantasy (Zizek 2012: 475, 685, 689–690), which "as a kind of illusory screen" bestows a fictional sense of completeness, solidity, fullness, and closure to the social assemblages. The negating power of the imaginary negates the 'not-all', 'not-whole' character of the symbolic. In a sense the negating force of the imaginary steals the infinitude of the real and attributes it to the symbolic. The fantasy in its Janus-like character also serves as a symptom demonstrating the irresistible urge to overcome finitude and to embrace infinitude and experience of fullness (Zizek 2012: 689–690, 696). As such, fantasy and ideology are the sites of impossibility inherent to human condition (the desire to be One or a proper whole). Fantasy serves as a bridge from the finitude of the symbolic to the infinitude of the real. In this sense, symbolic order requires the fantasy for its consistency and as such fantasy and ideology are indispensable to the social reality. As Zizek (2012: 995–996) maintains:

> Even if reality is "more real" than fantasy, it still needs fantasy to retain its consistency: if we subtract fantasy, the fantasmatic frame, from reality, reality itself loses its consistency and disintegrates.

As such, the social assemblage is the site of interplay between the modalities of infinitude and abundance of the real alongside its state of creative destruction, and finitude of the symbolic and the imaginary and their associated state of order and harmony. The stability of all and every form of combination of the symbolic and the imaginary is disturbed by the creatively destructive power of the real. As such, the forms of each experience, each event, and each entity—as different forms of transient and stable events—are constructed out of the stabilizing, structuring, and territorializing powers of affirmative and negating dimensions of the symbolic and the imaginary (world of signification and regimes of truth) alongside the destabilizing, de-structuring, and deterritorializing power of the real alongside its rhizomatic creative power in engendering new compounds and novel mutational combinations. Ultimately, each regime of truth, as a singular, complex, and messy system of combination of the real,

the symbolic, and the imaginary, marks a break and a promise, but also inherently entails the necessary possibility of failure due to its foreclosure and blind spots.

Dasein, Cogito, *Double-Hermeneutics*

We are exploring all of these categories to be able to see what the conscious and unconscious rationalities of the Shah, Khomeini, and Mojahedin Organization, for instance, were and how they have come to produce a series of unintended consequences like underdevelopment, political violence, or revolutions in their interactions. Considering the structural features of social assemblages and following Ricoeur (1981) and Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009), this study adopts a novel hybrid methodology combining hermeneutics of understanding and hermeneutics of suspicion. This study treats the social assemblages (actors, discourses, events, and practices) both as texts and objects. As texts they are pregnant with meanings, and as objects they are "things of this world", following the critical observation made by Foucault (1980: 131): "truth is a thing of this world".[13] To access their meanings, we follow the insights offered by the method of free association (Hollway and Jefferson 2013; see also Brinkmann 2013: 7–8) through the art of listening to the other, requiring the matter of incommensurability[14] and its associated issues of cultural transference and counter-transference (Schwab 2012) to be overcome.

[13] As Le Guin (2004: 178) observes: "Words are events, they do things, change things". This is in line with Austin's (1962)/(1975) theory of speech acts. Seeing words and symbolic entities as things and as events has a Nietzschean spirit to it where "For Nietzsche, phenomena, organisms, societies and States are nothing other than the expression of particular configurations of forces" (Spinks 2010: 184). Bass (2006: xii) alludes to the same notion where he states that "In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1983) Deleuze emphasizes Nietzsche's much misunderstood notion of will to power. He makes it clear that will to power is not about any individual's attempt to exert domination over another. Rather, it is a way of understanding all phenomena in terms of conflicts between nonconscious differentials of force". This is ultimately related to the questions of 'what being a human means' and 'what being a thing means' (Dreyfus 2001, 2011) and how they interrelate, which we will address thoroughly in the forthcoming book on the logic of social inquiry.

[14] The principle of incommensurability (MacIntyre 1988; Isaiah Berlin 1990, Chang 1997) describes a default position in which singularities cannot be compared and contrasted according to a set of common or universal measures. As Bhabha (1990: 209) reminds us, "The assumption that at some level all forms of cultural diversity may be understood on the basis of a particular universal concept, whether it be 'human being', 'class' or 'race', can be both very dangerous and very limiting in trying to understand the ways in which cultural practices construct their own systems of meaning and social organisation".

This study offers the formula of *dasein-cogito-dasein* (alongside notions such as Davidson's principle of charity, suspension of disbelief, and being the devil's advocate) as the way to overcome the impediments to smooth communication. The encounter with the radical other (a *dasein*) or "strange stranger" (Bryant 2011: 268) bestows the chance to the analyst (another *dasein*) to turn himself/herself from a *dasein* into a *cogito*, from a self into a subject by subtracting the relevant contents and reducing himself into a form (see Zizek 2012: 876; Myers 2003).

Ironically, to understand *daseins* we need to become *cogito*, but before that, we need to have the experience of being a *dasein* (because without the affirmative and productive dimensions of the symbolic, we are mere feral children). The researcher needs to take a risky voyage of discovery from his own specific content to the universal form of *cogito* and move to new content offered by the other (the other's *dasein*). The journey from one *dasein* (the researcher's) to another *dasein* (the researched, the radical other) passes through the bridge of universal *cogito*. The universality of the forms of language, actions, and emotions allows this movement from content-to-form-to-new-content to be possible. As Ricoeur puts it, "*belonging-to* language provides the universal medium of *belonging-to* being" (Blundell 2010: 37). Because all social assemblages have the three dimensions of real, symbolic, and imaginary with their negations and affirmations, it is possible to understand the other by following the other's internal logic of signification (the other's chain of signifiers with their particular quilting points and master signifiers) in the other's speeches, actions, emotions, or organization of objects.

It should be noted that in any act of signification we have the signifier, the signified, and the absent presence of a reference (Bianchi 2015; Scruton 2016: 14). The existence of such a three-term structure in any encounter between two social assemblages with markedly different contents makes the communication possible. It appears that we move from the signifier to the signified and to the absent presence of reference and we enter into the world of signification of the other through the common absent presence of a system of references. The fact that we encounter the real as a reference and symbolize it through our systems of signs (in words, actions, emotions, and organization of objects) is the condition of possibility of communication (even misunderstanding). In any encounter we move from a signifier to a signified (which is a chain of signifiers), and to an absent presence of a reference (part of a system of reference, the real), and then from there, we enter the world of signification of the other and her/his own chain of signifiers (the signifier and the signified). This applies

to everything from a tree, to water, violence, development, love, and democracy. Through this process we enter the other's dictionary and its denotations and connotations. We have the reference of a dog, for instance, which is signified differently in different regimes of truth, as a beloved companion or as an edible animal or as an untouchable (*najes*). Various regimes of truth emerge in this encounter.

In this, thus, the denotations (the direct dictionary meaning of what a dog is) are the arrested meanings of terms and the connotations are how the statements (and images, actions, emotions, and organization of objects) are made to function as the signifier to convey new meanings (see Lechte 1994; Eco 1976). Thus, in this process what acts as the ultimate bridge between various conceptions and experiences of a dog is the three-term structure involved in the act of signification and symbolization. In relation to Iranian realities, the hostage crisis, the Iran-Iraq war, and the 1953 coup, for instance, function as common (absent) referents for alternative forms of symbolizations and imagination. We can enter the world of signification of the other through these common absent references and see how they are caught up in the dynamics of symbolic-imaginary orders.

This requires heavy and risky investment in time, energy, effort, and emotion and is hard to achieve. We almost always misunderstand the other and portray the worldhood of the other as 'a ruined old shack' (Myers 2003: 107). Instead, as Foucault (1981: 8) says:

> One does not have to be in solidarity with them [the opponents of the Shah's regime in Iran]. One does not have to maintain that these confused voices sound better than the others and express the ultimate truth. For there to be a sense in listening to them and in searching for what they want to say, it is sufficient that they exist and that they have against them so much which is set up to silence them.

After being a devil's advocate, as advocated by Foucault, we need to investigate the interactional patterns between various social assemblages. We adopt the causal analysis alongside applying the insights offered by complexity sciences (notion such as co-evolution, non-linearity and butterfly effect, self-organization, path dependency, etc.) to unravel the mechanisms, processes, patterns, and trends emerging out of the interactions between the social assemblages as objects and their associated unintended consequences.

As such, we study social assemblages (actions, experiences, selves, faces, organizations, societies, nations, events, etc.) at three levels: part of a

meaning whole, part of a corporeal or virtual system, and as an object caught up in the chains of causation. Similar to the process of producing solid, liquid, and gas out of the Brownian motions of particles, the Brownian motions between various forms of social assemblages with their associated regimes of truth (the interaction between forces, voices, and faces) produce four types of societies: homogenous (with a dominant regime of truth), heterogeneous (with the population divided between various regimes of truth), troubled (where each social assemblage is torn between various regimes of truth), and failed (where the society collapse as a result of incessant wars between various regimes of truth). Another example where the principle of emergence can be seen in action is the hostage crisis after the 1979 revolution; it was the outcome of interaction between various embedded social assemblages with their passive agencies trapped in a traumatic state of mutual misunderstanding, which soon afterwards had a life of its own and gave rise to the emergence of a series of unintended consequences.

In this study, thus, the art of overcoming incommensurability through understanding of the radical other in her own terms alongside exploring how social assemblages in their interactions give rise to emergent 'events' is called—following Highmore (2006) and Karpik (2010)—'the science of singularities'. This demonstrates that the principle of 'multiple realizability' (Sawyer 2005: 66) and 'institutional diversity' (Ostrom 2005) are applicable to social phenomena. Each social phenomenon—like love, violence, war, democracy, development—is realized differently in different historical contexts and within diverse institutional arrangements. The meanings attached to the concepts and lived experiences associated with life, work, and language are subtly but significantly different in Japan, India, China, and Iran in comparison to the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries.[15] What is common is the three-term form while the content (historically embedded and situated denotations and connotations) is entirely different.

Chakrabarty and Two Types of History

Chakrabarty (2000: 72), for instance, identifies the relation of labour to the realm of gods through rituals in India and observes how secular history usually fails to practise the art of listening and understanding the radi-

[15] See Taylor (2001) on the drastic difference in the conceptions and institutions of lifetime work in the Japanese society compared to the hire-and-fire model of work in the Anglo-Saxon context.

cal other, and has frequently opted to reduce the rituals into the pre-modern form of superstition and subsume the difference under the logic of the same. The same cardinal sin of social inquiry (reducing the difference to the logic of the same) seems to have been committed by Kuran (2004, 2011) when he sees no identifying and distinctive feature in the Islamic economics but for rituals and as such combatively dismisses the notion of Islamic economics and views the Islamic law at the roots of socio-economic underdevelopment in the Middle East. By applying hermeneutics of alterity, we may, for instance, come to the realization that the rituals and the mere act of appellation (as Saul Kripke (1980) sees a name as a 'rigid designator' assigned by a 'primal baptism') by saying 'In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful' are meant to relate the mundane realms of life like economy and sexuality to the realm of the sacred, as Chakrabarty reminded us already, and as such weave spatiotemporal existence with the realm of eternity (Rajaee 2006, 2007). This misunderstanding of the other is frequently repeated with regard to the experiences of suicide in Japan, eating dogs in the Far Eastern countries, treating cows as holy in India (Adcock 2010), and gun ownership in America, amongst others.

In line with this argument, Chakrabarty (2000: 89; see also Ghamari-Tabrizi 2016) calls the writing of history which is attentive to difference and incommensurability of the lifeworlds history 2 as opposed to history 1 (the secular history) which reduces and translates all forms of the past to its own life form. According to Chakrabarty, history 1

> seeks to dispel and demystify gods and spirits as so many ploys of secular relationships of power. The moment we think of the world as disenchanted, however, we set limits to the ways the past can be narrated.

Here in history 1, the hermeneutics of suspicion is used to suppress and disregard the hermeneutics of understanding.

> But the idea of History 2 beckons us to more affective narratives of human belonging where life forms, although porous to one another, do not seem exchangeable through a third term of equivalence such as abstract labor. (Chakrabarty 2000: 71)

The extremely important point made here by Chakrabarty (2000) is that the fact that social assemblages and regimes of truth and lifeworlds are inevitably open to each other and trade and learn from each other does

not imply that they lose their unique characters, as their layers of sedimented embeddedness and path dependency determine how they select from the rival lifeworlds and how they uniquely combine them and make sense of them in a new whole. Chakrabarty (2000: 94) further alludes to the fact that:

> … to talk about the violent jolt the imagination has to suffer to be transported from a temporality cohabited by nonhumans and humans to one from which the gods are banished is not to express an incurable nostalgia for a long-lost world. Even for the members of the Indian upper classes, in no sense can this experience of traveling across temporalities be described as merely historical.

This clearly demonstrates that the realm of work and economy (productivity, investment, saving, inflation, unemployment, and growth) takes different meanings in different contexts of culture and there is nothing universal about work and economy except its name as a rigid designator for a realm and in being a common form in the sense of this realm being embedded in a lifeworld and a regime of truth with its three dimensions of real, symbolic, and imaginary, with their negating and affirmative dimensions.

Free Association and Cultural Psychoanalysis

Applying the method of free association to the social phenomena (as in Hollway and Jefferson 2013) means being attentive to the internal logic of social assemblages by listening to the totality of the meanings expressed in actions, talks, events, and organizations of objects rather than selectively approaching and appropriating them based on the analyst's standards of rationality, relevance, and importance (as Chakrabarty reminded us about the two types of history). The point in using the free-association method is to break away from the addicted connections and sense of meaningfulness, relevance, and importance embodied in the lifeworld of the researcher and give the researcher the tools and the theoretical justifications to enter the wonderland of the shared singularity of other social assemblages (experiences, events, individuals, groups, organizations, or nations). This means that in understanding social phenomena like London Riot, Islamic Revolution, Iran hostage crisis, 1953 Anglo-American coup against Mosaddegh in Iran, 2008 financial crisis, the Iranian experience of wealth creation, high rate of suicide

in Japan, high rate of driving accidents in Iran, we need to enter the wonderland of the world of signification associated with those particular events, rather than subsuming them under covering law-like generalities.

Free association turns the researcher from a master of knowledge into a seeker and a listener to the alien voices embedded in every experience, event, or social entities like individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, or nations. It is apt, therefore, for Shayegan (2012) to invite us to conduct cultural psychoanalysis in order to understand the roots of current problems in Iran. It is worth noting that, as Myers (2003: 20) observes,

> In the hands of Lacan, however, psychoanalysis assumes cosmic ambitions, vaulting over the boundaries of its own discipline and engaging with politics, philosophy, literature, science, religion and almost every other field of learning to form a vast theory that has a hand in analysing every arena of endeavour in which human beings take part.

As such psychoanalysis vies with economics in being the language of social sciences, but we use them as complementary. In the state of belated inbetweenness, the need for hermeneutics of alterity and cultural psychoanalysis alongside the appreciation of the role of embeddedness (*qada*) and emergence (*qadar*) and passive and active agency is more than ever apparent. Also, it is important to note that the approximate equivalent of the notion of embeddedness and emergence in Islamic philosophy and theology are *qada* and *qadar* (Izutsu, 176–177; Subḥani, 55–57). The equivalence to the principle of incommensurability can be found in verse 49: 13 in the Quran, indicating the need for mutual understanding and declaring that God created mankind in nations and tribes in order for them to know each other, equivalent to what Dabashi (2013: 25) calls "hermeneutics of alterity". This verse inspired various forms of movements—dubbed as the Shu'ubiyyeh movement (Dabashi 2013: 52–54; Jamshidian Tehrani 2014)—in the early years of the Islamic age in Iran and other Muslim countries against discrimination and patrimonialism.

Politics of Referencing

We have followed the principle of democratization of referencing in this work via referencing multiplicity of voices (see Ackerly and Bajpai 2017: 279). The number of references consulted was much wider (more than 200 pages of references) than what is actually reported in this work due to the word limits.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that in understanding social phenomenon like socio-economic development in Iran, five things matter: prices, governance, institutions, mind, and history. History is path-dependent where random and traumatic events generate a single chain of events. As a result, through history and mind and their path dependences, bifurcations, and self-organizations, the whole social order and its historical evolution and its traumatic experiences comes into play, which requires a thick interdisciplinary description at the intersection of economics, politics, philosophy, and psychoanalysis. We investigated the constitution of social assemblages and its relation to regimes of truth and the three Lacanian registers and their affirmative and negating dimensions. We established the appropriate methodology for investigating the interaction between such social assemblages. Social orders are both texts and objects, embedded in bigger wholes. The holistic nature of social phenomena as complex self-organizing systems necessitates using the three principles of embeddedness, emergence, and incommensurability and the two hermeneutics. We deploy the method of free associations to understand social assemblages, and we utilize complex system and causal analysis to explore the unintended consequences of the interactions between meaningful, complex wholes.

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CHAPTER 3

The Theoretical Model of the Iranian Modern History

As mentioned in the previous chapters, and following the diagnosis made by Hodgson (2002), Rodrik (2007), the World Bank (2005, 2015), and Easterly (2001, 2007a, b, 2014), this study aims to come up with a conceptual model uniquely tailored to the Iran-specific experiences of socio-economic development using a double-hermeneutics hybrid methodology. The main argument of this study revolves around the proposition that the Iranian experience of socio-economic crises may be the outcome of the failure to produce a stable regime of truth (Foucault 1980) because of the dynamic interplay between the context of culture and the context of situation, as formulated by Malinowski (1935: 73). Foucault (1980: 93–94) makes the following ground-breaking and astonishing observation:

> In the last analysis, we must produce truth as we must produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place.

In the case of Iran, the failure to produce truth seems to be at the heart of the failure to produce wealth. The failure to produce truth and wealth seems to be in turn rooted in the hyper-complex nature of the Iranian contexts. The composite notion of belated inbetweenness attempts to capture the Iran-specific nature of context of culture and context of situation.

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The State of Belated Inbetweenness

The two distinct notions of contexts can pave the way for delving deeper into the troubled relation between truth and wealth. In the modern history of Iran, the 'context of culture' is characterized, in this work, by the notion of 'inbetweenness' and the 'context of situation' by the concept of 'belatedness' (Bhabha 1990a, b, 1994; Huddart 2006; Shayegan 1997, 2007; Byrne 2009; Seeburger 2016). In the following sections, we address each of these notions separately and explore how they combine to create a state of confusion in the Iranian *dasein*, which further through cascading effects leads to the formation of unstable coalitions, dysfunctional institutions, and emergence of a chaotic order.

Inbetweenness and Cultural Schizophrenia

Various theorists have embarked on addressing the predicaments associated with the state of being trapped between contradictory cultural forces. For Shayegan (1997: ix, 77), the state of inbetweenness implies that "we are situated on the fault-line between incompatible worlds", "each of which marks a different 'historical a priori'". This state is further characterized by features like "inner contradictions", "living in different periods of time", and missing "the crucial moments of history". These inner contradictions, as Tavakoli-Targhi (2009: 5) observes, prompt "the emergence of a schizophrenic view of history and the formation of schizophrenic social subjects" and breeds constant waves of resentment and discontent (Mansouri-Zeyni and Sami 2014; Brah and Coombes 2000). Shayegan (1997: 25) gives the example of possible contradictions between three systems of law (Sharia, customary or common law, and modern law) in the Moroccan context. The state of inbetweenness is alternatively dubbed as the state of cultural schizophrenia by Shayegan (1997) and is defined by de Alba (1995: 106) as

> the presence of mutually contradictory or antagonistic beliefs, social forms, and material traits in any group whose racial, religious, or social components are a hybrid (or ***mestizaje***) of two or more fundamentally opposite cultures.

Kraidy (2012: 238) reports the same phenomenon in Saudi Arabia, Merrell (2003: 189) in Mexico, Tejapira (2002: 210, 212–213) in Thailand, Visser (2008: 232) in China, Olesen (1995: 227) in Afghanistan,

Esposito (1999: 194) in Turkey, and Daniels (1985: 47) in Russia. Alongside Shayegan, Jahanbegloo (2004: xi), Ringer (2004: 47), Sadri (2004: 118), Tavakoli-Targhi (2004: 132), and Tehranian (2004: 200), among others, referred to various forms of cultural or national schizophrenia in Iran.

Inbetweenness and Hybridization

The state of inbetweenness instigates incessant waves of processes of hybridization (Canclini 2005: xxvii) or grafting and patching operations (Shayegan 1997: 60, 76) between the alternative forces (regimes of truth), leading to the emergence of numerous hybrid forms of voices, coalitions, institutions, discursive and non-discursive practices, and diverse forms of life.[1] Here we clearly distinguish the three notions of inbetweenness, denoting a state, hybridization,[2] which is a process, and hybridity, referring to the outcomes of the interaction between the state and the processes. These hybrid outcomes can survive and thrive or can go extinct or become dysfunctional and deformed or mutilated (Shayegan 1997: 54) depending on whether they are products of reverse social engineering or the embedded outcomes of evolutionary processes of chaotic synchronization. These hybrid forms can be deemed as legitimate, bastard, monstrous, or zombie-like. Cultures (a mixture of legitimate and illegitimate forms of life) and civilizations (institutionalized forms of life) are the by-products of the process of hybridization of alternative regimes of truth.

Crucially, the state of inbetweenness has no significant resemblance to the phenomenon of multiculturalism in the West (Kymlicka 1995; Taylor 1994)—or its latest reincarnation in the notion of post-secularism (Calhoun et al. 2011, 2013)—due to the dominance of modernity in the Western context of culture and its stable institutionalization while being subject to incremental consensual changes. Even diaspora population immersed in their own particular form of state of inbetweenness face a

[1] See also Shirazi (2018) for the application of the notion of 'space-in-between' to the Iranian architecture. In the following sections, we address the question of why these processes of hybridization are inevitably triggered and how the features of "grafting and patching operations", "living in different periods of time", and missing "the crucial moments of history" work themselves in the notions of "vanishing mediators" and "reverse social engineering".

[2] Later on, we will explore how the notion of hybridization can be connected to the Deleuzian notion of rhizome (Colman 2010) and the process philosophy in general.

fairly stable background in the Western context, which does not exist back in the homelands (e.g. in the case of legal systems or parliament or functioning banking system, hospitals, schools, police, and army, among others). Shayegan (1997: vii) emphasizes this point in the following terms: "The real tenor of this experience, in its current critical phase, hardly impinges on the Western consciousness. For the truth is that it is not a Western problem. The only people really qualified to draw attention to it are those who pay the price, in 'unhappy consciousness." Essentially, hybridization within a stable background with functional institutions, governance structures, and price system, what Bauman (2000) dubbed as "liquid modernity", is markedly different from hybridization within a fluid background, lacking institutional stability, functioning governance structures, and working price system in almost all fields of life, work, and language. Postmodern forms of playful hybridization in the Western and Japanese contexts, for instance, happen within stable institutionalized modern or hybrid backgrounds.

In a larger global context, cultures and regimes of truth may converge, diverge, or mix (Pieterse 2015: 60) and experience 'convergent divergence' (Gourevitch 2003: 325; Taylor 2001: 185) or various forms and degrees of 'glocalization' (Ritzer and Atalay 2010: 319) or 'disjunctive synthesis' as Deleuze and Guattari (1984: 83) put it. Under various forms of pressures of hybridization, they may also collapse and become failed states. This produces our four types of societies: homogenous, heterogeneous, troubled, and failed, as mentioned before.

Belatedness and Cultural Trauma

Belatedness, as Clark (2001: 31) defines it, is "the feeling that one has come upon the literary or cultural scene after his or her time, or after all "significant" contributions have been made". In the literature on socio-economic development (Chang 2003; Easterly 2007a, b, 2014, among others), the notions of a nation-state being a "late-comer" to the development scene and the associated urge for "catching-up" with the pioneer nation-states and "leapfrogging" the state of backwardness capture the notion of belatedness (Yap and Rasiah 2017; Lee 2016; Pieterse 2010: 132). In the context of socio-economic development, belatedness, being late to the packaged truth of modernity and development, became interwoven with extreme trauma due to the catastrophic encounter with multiple manifestations of dark and bright faces of modernity (Hairi

1987/1988). In the Iranian modern context, modernity with its global bio-politics and modes of governmentality has been frequently experienced as an overwhelming force (Juggernaut) and waves of floods through incessant encounters with its military, techno-scientific, legal, economic, and cultural faces (Nasri 2007; Vahdat 2002). The traumatic encounter with all contradictory manifestations of modernity as 'dark light' generated, as Matthee (2002) observes, the sense of "suspicion, fear and admiration" and instigated 'politics of despair and resentment' in the Iranian subject. The decadent and predatory nature of modernity alongside its glories of science, technology, and rule of law prompted the senses of shock and awe, agony, and ecstasy in the Iranian *dasein* (see, e.g. the notion of post traumatic syndrome with regard to the 1953 coup in Dabashi 2010: 92). Belatedness (being late to modernity) is, as such, interwoven with trauma. To explore how this connection is established, we need to briefly delve into the literature on trauma studies.

Sztompka (2004) identifies traumatic events with four features of being sudden, comprehensive, fundamental, and unexpected. Heller (2007: 103) classifies three forms of traumas: structural (like the trauma of birth and death), historical (like Holocaust or slavery), individual (like cancer). Based on the works of Luckhurst (2008) and Latour (2004), Rothberg (2014: xi) maintains that "Trauma is perhaps best thought of not as any kind of singular object but rather … as 'knots' or 'hybrid assemblages' that 'tangle up questions of science, law, technology, capitalism, politics, medicine and risk'." The conception of trauma as a tangled object and a social assemblage fits well with Lacanian-Zizekian conceptions of three registers of real, symbolic, and imaginary and the characterization of their affirmative and negating dimensions in this study. This saves trauma studies from a lot of confusion and muddled theorization. Trauma is a sudden, drastic, unexpected, and overwhelming event in its dimension of real and is entangled with science, religion, technology, and so on in its provocation of perplexity and its resultant speech acts, and discursive and non-discursive practices associated with the truth claims of symbolic dimension, and myth, ideology, and identity in its imaginary dimension.

These three registers can be seen at work in the observation made by Faulkner (2007: 126): "According to Freud, the trauma results from a shock to the mental apparatus caused by a large quantum of stimulation for which one is insufficiently prepared. The repetition of this incursion in dreams, and the transference, represents a belated attempt to master the situation—to lay claim to the experience." In effect, the real hits the social

assemblage, the social assemblage tries to make sense of it and to explore various forms of "truth about it" through the typologies and classifications available in the symbolic order and to make a claim on it through packaging, naming, and appellation available in the imaginary order. The manifestation of belatedness emerging as trauma creates rupture in the fabric of time and partitions it into a 'before and after' structure. As Faulkner (2007: 126, footnote 11) observes, "Trauma signals the beginning of temporality insofar as the subject is formed in relation to it." Seeburger (2016) characterizes trauma by the inextricable interconnection of the following four features: (1) belatedness, (2) excessiveness, (3) importunity, and (4) irremediability.

From the moments of drastic encounters with the incomprehensible comprehensiveness of modernity in the first half of the nineteenth century, Iranian *dasein* has been struck by the excessiveness of the trauma of 'development gap' (Nasri 2007; Tavakoli-Targhi 2001) and has been ever since engaged belatedly to catch up with it. With its excessiveness and belatedness, trauma challenges us to rethink thinking itself and drastically inspects our cherished and largely habitual and unconscious sets of associations embedded and sedimented in our background. Trauma, as Seeburger (2016: 172) reminds us, challenges the most fundamental categories of thought: life and death, identity and difference, sameness and otherness.

Ultimately, "to think the disaster" may lead to the suspicion that the "disaster is thought" (Seeburger 2016: 163). Seeburger (2016: 170) captures this feature in the notion of importunity. After 9/11, the Americans were importuned with the question of "why do they hate us so much?" (Faulkner 2007: 129, footnote 24). In Iran, the question of "why are we backward?" has been importuned by the traumatic encounter with modernity in the last 200 years. Seeburger (2016: 171) further adds that:

> ineluctable importunity of trauma also links into the incomprehensibility that, together with its comprehensiveness, constitutes trauma's excessiveness.

Beyond the development gap, the state of belatedness for the Iranian *dasein* was rooted at the deeper level of traumatic encounter with modernity's radical otherness as a novel regime of truth. This phenomenon is dubbed as cultural trauma (Alexander et al. 2004; Smelser 2004) in the literature on trauma studies. Meek (2016: 30) sees it in the following terms:

> Cultural trauma is composed of images and narratives that convey the impact and threat of catastrophe on large populations.

As Neria and Ataria (2016: 394) put it,

> major events such as the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, and the 9/11 attacks have the potential to penetrate the core of societies, transforming basic ways of intellectual functioning, and overhauling their cultural infrastructures.

As such, cultural trauma can lead to the crisis of meaning and identity. Eyerman (2004: 63) attests that "A traumatic tear evokes the need to "narrate new foundations", prompting the emergence of what Sztompka (2004: 160) calls a "whole "meaning industry".

The bewildering and overwhelming nature of encounter with cultural trauma of modernity manifests itself in the epoch-making emergence of incomprehensible comprehensiveness of an almost fully shaped novel regime of truth, representing a radically different grid of intelligibility. As Zizek (2008: 13, original emphasis) reminds us,

> [A] true historical break does not simply designate the 'repressive' loss (or 'progressive' gain) of something, but ***the shift in the very grid which enables us to measure losses and gains***.

Faulkner (2007: 134, original emphasis) captures how trauma is deeply rooted in our encounter with the other:

> our difference from one another is ***essentially*** traumatic. We affect one another ***from another place***—the unanticipated and uncanny outside (what Lacan will call 'the Real') that nonetheless wields the authority of inevitability upon us. … Lacan contends, psychoanalysis is at bottom an ethical enquiry that attempts to negotiate the relation between the self and the other, by interrogating the site of their encounter in the trauma. This otherness, the real, is both revealed and occulted by the trauma.

This insightful passage captures the nature of the 200-year ambiguity and confusion of the Iranian traumatic encounter with modernity.

Crucially, cultural trauma can be transmitted from one generation to the next through common narratives (Heller 2007: 114)[3] and can "fuel cycles of retraumatization" (Vermeulen 2014: 145) through continuous exposure to the source of trauma or continuous failure to 'work through'

[3] See also Schwab (2010) for the notion of 'transgenerational trauma' and DeGruy (2005) for the notion of 'post traumatic slave syndrome'.

it. As such, trauma can be continuous as well as sudden. As Vermeulen (2014: 144) puts it, trauma can be a continuum for the vulnerable groups and communities.

In the same spirit, Ifowodo (2013: 21) refers to colonialism and post-colonialism as traumatic processes:

> At the very least, we must acknowledge that the historical trauma caused by colonialism created a radically altered sense of self for the colonized and causes the postcolonial subject, even now, to pose to him or herself, consciously or unconsciously, the question, "In reality, who am I?"

As such, in an excessively vulnerable context of belatedness, cultural trauma of encounter with modernity can be both a sudden event and a continuous process. The exposure to all diverse faces of modernity alongside its deepest transformative and terrifying kernel has been the source of cycles of re-traumatization in the modern history of Iran, manifested in strong and weak events of the Iranian modern history alongside the traumatic experience of dysfunctionality and deformity in all realms of life, work, and language.

Kamrava (2018: 52) addresses the same phenomenon under the broader notion of "human security" and sees the troubles of the Middle East region having deep roots in the serious threats and challenges posed to the human security in that region. Belatedness triggers the transformative and endemic sense of traumatic insecurity associated with the erosion of cultural identity. Halliday (1990: 248) finds that:

> "this supposedly paranoid streak" in the political culture of modern Iran has "its historical national roots" in traumatic experiences of "external interventions", "just as the anxiety and illusions of individuals can have roots in their own earlier traumatic experiences".

This can be related to the notion of "cultural trauma" developed by Alexander et al. (2004: 1) as "a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon the consciousness of members of a collectivity, and changes their identity fundamentally and irrevocably". The continuous encounter with various faces of modernity acted as a form of stretched event, leaving its horrendous scars on the Iranian forms of individuality and collectivity. As such, after the humiliating defeats of the nineteenth century in the hands of the Russians and the British and the subsequent chain of events,

the last 200 years of Iranian history forms a Deleuzian single series (Young 2013: 96, 282; see also Katouzian 2004: 34; Akhavi 1998: 695; Arjomand 1988: 30, for the potent sense of humiliation in shaping the different episodes of the Iranian modern history).

Alexander et al. (2004) further identify that the event per se does not cause trauma but is mediated by its representation. The gap between the event and its representation is bridged by the "trauma process" involving "carrier groups" like elites, intellectuals, clergies, poets, and artists involved in the creation of negative meanings associated with the triggering events. This is a Lacanian process of encounter with the real and its ensuing symbolic and imaginary registers. This process generates a series of traumas, paradoxes, and myths associated with a particular set of events like the Russo-Iranian wars or Iran hostage crisis or the whole stretched event of encounter with modernity (see Mobasher 2012, for the trauma of the Islamic Revolution for the exiled Iranians, for instance).

The traumatic experience of belatedness creates what Fanon calls the "zone of occult instability" (Ifowodo 2013: 14) and what Chakrabarty (2011: 168) calls the 'now' imagination (as opposed to the 'not-yet' imagination) and instigates waves of acting-out in the form of various episodes of reverse social engineering in order to stop and reverse the excruciating pains associated with the zone of occult instability and its associated development gap, and to escape from a world that seems 'nasty, brutish, and short'. As Ifowodo maintains,

> The occult, if we must spell it out, suggests not only the supernatural but also that which is not easily apprehended or understood-indeed, that which is concealed or occluded from us under normal modes of inquiry.

Fanon calls for taking a psychoanalytic position (Ifowodo 2013: 25), which requires the art of listening to the free associations of all sides of the traumatic experience, namely, the colonizer and the colonized, the perpetrator and the victim, the self and the other.

Belated Inbetweenness and Tragedy of Confusion

Overall, while the state of inbetweenness makes us exposed to schizophrenia, the state of belatedness makes us vulnerable to various episodes of reverse social engineering and acting-out. The state of 'inbetweenness' has manifested itself in the modern history of Iran in the state of bewilderment and perplexity, grasped via the notion of 'tragedy of confusion'. This

notion is designed to capture the urgent and pressing sense of being torn between warring regimes of truth.[4] The modern history of Iran appears to be littered with ample evidence of tragedy of confusion. *The Travel Diary of Ebrahim Beg* (*Siyahatnameh-ye Ibrahim Beig*) (Maragha'i 2006) written at the end of the nineteenth century and one of the texts behind the Constitutional Revolution captures, as reported in Nasri (2007: 89, see also Sohrabi 2012: 121–123), the Iranian state of confusion succinctly:

> everywhere the landscape is disturbed (*ashofteh*), people disturbed, commerce disturbed, imagination disturbed, beliefs disturbed, city disturbed, king disturbed, oh God, why is there so much disturbance [everywhere]?

This description seems to be applicable to almost all episodes of Iranian modern history—as Movahhed (1999, 2004) uses the notion of "confused (or disturbed) dreams (*khab-e ashofteh*)" to characterize the ONM, affirming Ibrahim Beig's insight on the nature of Iranian modern social reality—barring for the rare and fleeting moments of manifestation of "perfectly unified collective will" (Foucault, as reported in Afary and Anderson 2005: 95) or rare cases of institutional stability. About a century after Ibrahim Beig, Simin Daneshvar (1993, 2001), the prominent Iranian novelist, explores the same themes of 'disturbance', 'bewilderment', 'perplexity', and 'confusion' in her trilogy "Wandering Island (*Jazireh-ye Sargardani*)", "Wandering Cameleer (*Sareban-e Sargardan*)", and "Wandering Mountain (*Koh-e Sargardan*)". Iran alongside its leaders, citizens, groups, parties, organizations, and institutions seems to be trapped in the state of confusion.

The state of belatedness, on the other hand, refers to the state where the Iranian social order has found itself dwarfed by the shocking arrival of modernity, positioning it in the state of catching-up (Abramovitz 1986) and outside-in (rather than inside-out) model of evolution and development. The interaction between these two states is captured in the theoretical model proposed in this study as articulated in the following sections and in the previous and next chapters. This model starts from the level of mind as a social institution, as elaborated by Arkoun (2006) and the transaction-cost economist, Williamson (2000), and explores the implications of the specific characteristics of the Iranian mind and preference structure in an attempt to develop a multi-level (micro, meso, and macro) dynamic model in fulfilling the aim of this study.

[4] See a similar, but less theorized, Weberian concept of "war of gods" or "collision of values" (Lowy 1996: 2) and its application in Latin America.

Proposed Conceptual Model

The proposed conceptual model can be expressed in the following way: tragedy of confusion emanates from the state of inbetweenness with its associated confused preference structure, as Iranians have been captivated by three rival regimes of truth and identity markers of Islam, Persianism (the idea of pre-Islamic Iran), and Western modernity. The state of inbetweenness in its interaction with the state of belatedness prompts the translation of three regimes of truth into three projects of social engineering, namely, 'Persianization', Islamization, and modernization in order to achieve social transformation to fill the development gap and repair its associated waves of identity crisis.

Reverse social engineering requires the formation of collective will and collective action, which through the formation of stable coalitions could achieve its goals. But in the state of confusion, the formation of such coalitions is almost impossible. This leads to a phenomenon described as 'situational impossibility theorem' in this study, indicating that in the complex interplay between the state of inbetweenness and the state of belatedness (hence, belated inbetweenness), it is impossible to form stable coalitions in any areas of life, work, and language to achieve the desired social transformations (we will see why later). This leads to turning Iran into a country of unstable coalitions and alliances in macro, meso, and micro levels. This in turn results in the emergence of the phenomenon of 'institutional failure' in the form of inability to construct stable and functional institutions such as modern nation-state, or market economy based on property rights or any other stable forms of institutional structures, which turns Iran into a country of institutional dysfunctionalities and deformities. The accumulated experiences of 'tragedy of confusion', 'formation of unstable coalitions', and 'institutional failure' lead to the emergence of a society immersed in a state of 'chaotic order'.

The state of chaotic order can be explained in the following terms: the experience of tragedy of confusion with its associated instability of coalitions and institutional dysfunctionalities frequently leads to the emergence of widespread sense of discontent and disillusionment, in turn, triggering the emergence of large- and small-scale social movements and revolutions culminating in the experience of constant waves of socio-political instability, where the society oscillates between the chaotic states of socio-political

anarchy emanating from irreconcilable differences between and within various social assemblages in the springs of freedom, and repressive states of order in the winters of discontent. In this process, the order is restored based on the emergence of a final arbiter or the Iranian leviathan as the evolved coping strategy for achieving conflict resolution leading to socio-economic crises and stagnation.

The following chapters, hence, aim to briefly discuss and unpack the components of this theoretical model.

Conclusion

This chapter strives to come up with a country-specific model of Iranian experience of socio-economic development in the last 200 years. This model relies on the two notions of belatedness and inbetweenness. Their meanings and application to the Iranian context is explored based on the theoretical insights from a multitude of disciplines. It is shown that the process of hybridization in a stable background is different from unstable background, which produces four types of societies. Inbetweenness is related to being torn between contradictory forces and belatedness is related to the pressures and urgencies associated with the need to catch up with pioneer societies. The relation between belatedness and trauma is explored. Trauma as shock is related to the notion of unpreparedness. Four features of traumas were explored and show how traumatic events can turn into a process and be transmitted intergenerationally and turn into a deeper problem in the shape of cultural traumas, where the collective and personal identities and meanings are violently questioned and deeply shaken. At its deepest level, the other is experienced as traumatic, which induces a sense of identitylessness. In the traumatic encounter with modernity, Iran started from a series of military defeats and woke up to the development gap and travelled deeper into cultural trauma and crisis in meaning, ultimately experiencing the radical other as traumatic. The implications of the state of belated inbetweenness turns Iranian modern history in the last 200 years into a single series encompassing "haunting legacies, violent histories, and transgenerational trauma" (Schwab 2010), or what Limbert (2009) calls "the ghosts of history", mediated by tragedy of confusion in the zone of occult instability and the emergence of a 'now' consciousness triggering waves of reverse social engineering as a way of 'acting-out'.

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CHAPTER 4

Tragedy of Confusion

Introduction

Our voyage of discovery for understanding the complexity, specificity, and singularity of Iranian experience of development starts with the fundamental question of "What constitutes Iranianness (in the same vein as Turkishness, Britishness, etc.)?", as the question of "Why are we backward?" logically tends to lead to the question of "Who and what are this 'we' as Iranians?" (see Akerlof and Kranton 2010). With regard to the notion of Iranianness and its constitution, Frye (1977/2000: 1–3) observes that:

> Of all of the lands of the Middle East, Iran is perhaps both the most conservative and at the same time the most innovative. Whereas Egypt and Syria, for example, underwent great changes in the course of two millennia of history, Iran seems to have preserved much more of its ancient heritage. … Iran was converted to the religion of Islam, but … [t]he continuity of ancient Iranian traditions down to the present is impressive… Paradoxically … Herodotus … said that no people were more prone to accept foreign habits as the Persians. Anyone who has walked the streets of new Tehran can see all kinds of styles of architecture and the latest women's dress styles.

Lewis (2004: 43, 46; see also Tavakoli-Targhi, 2001, 2009) affirms Frye's observation. These observations demonstrate how the three large forces of Persianism (the affiliation to the Iranian ancient pre-Islamic heritage), Islam, and Western modernity—as three distinct regimes of

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truth (regimes of truth as Foucauldian "things of this world" and as Lacanian-Zizekian (Zizek 2001) pieces of symbolic 'real')—interact and intermingle to shape the minds, institutions (all realms of life from family to economy, polity, and security), systems of governance, and the configuration of prices in the Iranian society.

Foucault (1984: 73) coins the notion of regimes of truth in the following terms:

> Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.

He further elaborates on the notion of truth and its intertwinement with power:

> "Truth" is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements. "Truth" is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extends it-A "regime" of truth.

The three hybrid packages of (real-symbolic-imaginary) truth of Persianism, Western modernity, and Islam fulfil Foucault's definitions. These 'symbolic' pieces of 'real' act as a grid of intelligibility and condition of possibility and impossibility for discourses, actions, affects, and thoughts. Regimes of truth are social assemblages subject to the rules and regularities governing the complex adaptive systems. They survive and thrive through the processes of 'reproduction' (constant routine circulation, reproduction, and reiteration of truths about life, work, and language inside its various platforms and institutions of power, knowledge, and subjectivity), 'variation' (borrowing from alternative regimes of truth through assimilation, accommodation, and appellation without losing their integrity and identity), and 'inheritance' (the use of social institutions and techniques of memory and subjectification to transfer itself to the next generation of social assemblages).

Abrahamian (2008: 2) alludes to the affiliation of Iranians with alternative regimes of truth in the following terms:

> Iranians identify with both Shi'i Islam and their pre-Islamic history, especially the Sassanids, Achaemenids, and Parthians. Names parents choose for their children are living proof of this.

Milani (2011, see also Keddie 1980: 99) points to the same fact when he states that:

> Iranian identity is bifurcated, split between the pre-Islamic traditions of Zoroastrian and Manichean millennium before Islam, and the Islam-influenced developments of the last 1300 years. But there has never been a consensus about which side of this bifurcation should be privileged.

The two notions of 'bifurcation' and 'giving privilege or precedence' to one regime of truth over another, deployed by Milani in the above quote, play crucial roles in our analysis, as our voyage of discovery strives to combine thick and thin descriptions of social phenomena through achieving cross-fertilization and hybridization between causational analysis (Cartesian *cogito*'s reductionism), analysis based on complex adaptive systems (e.g. lending the notions of bifurcation, path dependency, and butterfly effects), and cultural psychoanalysis achieved through the Heidegger's notion of worldhood. This leads to combining hermeneutics of suspicion with hermeneutics of understanding as Ricoeur (1981) recommends.

The use of double-hermeneutics hybrid method of analysis guides us to introduce the three principles of 'embeddedness' (rootedness), 'emergence' (the law of unintended consequences), and 'incommensurability' (viewing social phenomena as texts imbued with meanings and significations alongside acknowledgement of the fact that the state of misunderstanding and misreading is the default position plaguing the relation between social assemblages). This way of analysis acknowledges that social phenomena emerge in the interplay between the context of culture (incommensurable forms of embeddedness) and the context of situation (the ecology of social assemblages encompassing the topological configuration of different emergent social assemblages; the ordered neighbourhood of forces, voices, and faces).

While Milani (2011) does not include the continuous presence of the West in the matrix of Iranian identity, social order, and public imagination, Bausani (1975: 44; added emphasis; see also Davaran, 2010, Milani, 2004), the Italian Iranologist, attests to the uninterrupted presence of the West in the Iranian lifeworld: "we may distinguish a slow process of

Westernization during the entire course of Iranian cultural history." Milani's and Bausani's observations on the trinity of the Iranian background have been addressed by Hunter (2014), Ansari (2014), Sharifi (2013), Shayegan (2007), Soroush (1993), Jahanbegloo (2004), Rajaee (2007), and Mackey (1998), among others.

Shayegan (2007: 87–91) introduces the notion of inbetweenness (*vaz'eeyat-e beinabeini* va '*na in na aani*' literally translatable as 'the state of inbetweenness and not thisness not thatness') and comes up with the grand, shocking, and paradoxical observation that "the current state of identitylessness is our identity" (Shayegan, 2007: 90).[1] Javad Tabatabai (1994/2006: 74), a prominent historian of political thought in Iran, endorses the same observation by maintaining that "from the perspective of the history of thought, the modern history of Iran has commenced in the state of not-this-not-that". Following these historical observations on the forces at work in the Iranian society, we start our analytical voyage with the structure of Iranian embodied and embedded mind (Williamson's level zero) and introduce two notions of 'confusion' and 'tragedy'.

Confusion

The notion of confusion is borrowed from Foucault (1981: 8) when he addresses the Iranians participating in the Islamic Revolution of 1979 as "confused voices" and also from Movahhed (1999, 2004) when he referred to the ONM as "the confused dreams". It is intended to capture the fact that each and every Iranian social actor is simultaneously captivated and repelled, affirmatively or negatively, by three large historical forces of Persianism (*bastan-gerayee*, i.e. classicism or archaism), Islam, and modernity (*tajaddod* and its dominant forms of Westernism = *gharb-garaei*). As Nietzsche put it, historical (unconscious) forces shape and configure subjectivities and their preferences and intentionalities (Ferrer 2004: 81). The unique and long history of Iranian nation on the silk road of alternative cultures and civilizations bequeaths them with a distinctive discursive and non-discursive reservoir and repertoire of historical resources in the form of three grand meta-narratives or regimes of truth originating in the Persian Empire, Islam, and Western modernity which function as identity markers

[1] Fang and Loury (2005) remind us that "Dysfunctional Identities Can Be Rational". As such, the state of identitylessness is the logical implication of immersion in the state of belated inbetweenness.

overflowing into everyday life of the nation in all sites of being and becoming from birth to death, in the selection of names at birth to the selection of dress code, public spheres, and spaces (like streets, parks, beaches, mountains etc.), to family, polity, economy, security, art, science, education, and entertainment. In this process, every site of social existence becomes a battleground for these three proselytizing forces for attaining a monopolistic position in the market for the production of truth, turning Iranian social order into a site for incessant truth wars in the search for total allegiance and loyalty (see Dabashi 2010: 63–64, on the active cases of Western proselytization in the Muslim lands, for instance).

In this dynamics, each regime of truth strives to be the dominant force in the market for packages of 'truth about' life, work, and language.[2] When one particular regime of truth wins the race in the battle for supremacy and takes over the formal structures of life, language and work, informal guerrilla wars are initiated by the marginalized ones (see Dabashi 2010: 69, for seeing the Islamic Republic itself as "a guerrilla operation, successfully masking itself as a state apparatus"). For example, when the coalition between Persian classicism and modernization dominated the socio-political space in the Pahlavi era, and the Western dress code under the appellation of Persianism became the advocated public policy, the Islamic side staged a guerrilla war by adopting and developing a new Islamic dress code which became dominant in the next era, which in turn invoked another round of backlash guerrilla war from the Western style of dress code in this period (see Paidar 1995; Sedghi 2007; Cronin 2014). While Western-style fashion designers were the dreaded and decadent cultural elites of the Pahlavi era, they are turned into revolutionary guerrilla fighters in the Islamic era, as manifested in the notion of lipstick jihad (Moaveni 2005).

These forces have shaped the material landscape of existence in speech and action through alternative structures of power/knowledge, institutional arrangements, and discursive formations, all materially embodied in memory and in senses, shaping the experiences associated with embodiment in the realms of vision, sound, smell, taste, and touch. These three alternative paradigms of 'language', 'thought', 'affects', 'actions', and 'organization of objects' with their distinct ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies, ethics, aesthetics, political philosophy, jurisprudence, mythologies, rituals, ceremonies, processions, memories,

[2] See Mokyr (2016) for the notion of market for ideas and Witham (2010) for the notion of market for Gods.

narratives, and sign systems formed on three axes of truth, goodness, and beauty and manifested in a multitude of discursive and non-discursive practices are dynamically defined in contradistinction to each other in a process of constantly changing unities in multiplicities.

These forces are events and processes, keeping their unities through the narratives of trajectories of their evolution (via symbolized and imagined archaeologies, genealogies and appellations). These are the retroactive and forward-looking narratives, weaving the present to the past and the future, and associating with particular conceptions of space-time continuum. Each force has the traces of the other in its constitutional make-up. These forces intermingle and generate rhizomatic movements and hybrid forms of beings at the level of 'real', while at the level of 'symbolic', each regime of truth strives to incorporate the best of the alternatives under its own discursive integrity. At the level of 'imaginary' (ideological and phantasy level), attempts are made to purify each regime of truth from being contaminated and polluted by the alternatives, which instigates the process of glorification of the self, based on its own white book of records and its own politics of piety, and demonization of the other, based on the black book of the other and her politics of ordinary, which presumes a Cartesian logic of subject-object relation and an Aristotelian logic of substance ontology. This paradoxical and messy dynamics generates a heavy burden of judgement and leads to the tragedy of confusion for the Iranian *dasein*.

The state of belated inbetweenness prompts the emergence of different projects of reverse social engineering to counter the traumatic sense of backwardness induced by the dwarfing effects of the arrival of modernity. As Rothenberg (2011: 1) puts it:

> In their logic, we find the most common gesture of every political program and every call for social change: identify a problem, locate its cause, and then eliminate that cause to solve the problem. This logic seems so self-evident as to be virtually tautological.

As we addressed in the methodology section, taking the approach of reverse social engineering is the outcome of the application of Cartesian *cogito*-based reductive method of analysis to the social phenomena. As Borgmann (1993: 35) reminds us:

> In the Discourse on Method, Descartes explicated his method in four rules: the rule of abstraction, of dissection, of reconstruction, and of control.

This approach ignores the complexity system (phenomenon like emergence, self-organization, butterfly effects, and path dependency) and worldhood nature of social phenomena. The application of this reductive method in the state of belated inbetweenness by social agents like Khomeini, the Shah, Mosaddegh, or Taqizadeh turns regimes of truth into projects of reverse social engineering. Each regime of truth gives rise to a project of social transformation. This process culminates in the emergence of three large projects of social change in the forms of Persianization, Islamization and modernization, as each regime of truth has historically evolved to specialize in a particular filed of rationality. In the context of Iranian history, Islam has evolved as the dominant force in the field of emancipative rationality, modernity in the field of instrumental rationality, and Persianism in the field of communicative rationality (these are addressed more extensively later in this chapter). As a result, each regime of truth is deemed as severely lacking and less credible in the alternative fields of rationality. As such, they attempt to fill their internal gaps and their structural holes by adopting and borrowing from their rivals. Regimes of truth, as things of this world, are engulfed in the play of finitude/infinitude (for Foucault's analytics of finitude, see Flynn 2005) and endowed with abundances and lacks, affirmations and negations; they attempt to mend their lacks by assimilating the select bright elements of the others as a 'defensive strategy'.

This process of hybridization leads each project to become constitutive of three wings (subprojects). The three wings of Persianization project are 'Persianized Persianization', 'Persianized Islamization', and 'Persianized modernization'. The three wings of Islamization project are 'Islamized Islamization', 'Islamized Persianization', and 'Islamized modernization'. The corresponding three wings of modernization project are 'modernized modernization', 'modernized Islamization', and 'modernized Persianization'. Through this process, the theoretical and ideal forms of each regime of truth are utilized to revolutionize the practical experience of itself and alternative regime of truth. As such each project is turned into a hybrid combination of all three regimes of truth while prioritizing one regime of truth over the other two. Here appellation (packaging, naming and labelling; rigid designators) is of utmost significance. The same component, a religious ritual or a festivity signify differently under different forms of appellation. In a way they act as different truth supermarkets for producing, distributing, and selling the same and/or different truth products.

Inside each hybrid project of reverse social engineering, there have emerged shades of voices emanating from the permutational combination of elements of the three sets (regimes) of truth. Voices emerge out of application of operations of addition and subtraction on the three sets of

regimes of truth. Khomeini's voice of political Islam, for example, can be described as a particular collection of pluses and minuses:

> (Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) + Islamic philosophy + Islamic mysticism + revolutionary Islam + progressive clergy – reactionary clergy + western constitutionalism + western science and technology – western social freedom (sex, drug and rock and roll; social vices) + modern social justice – modern godlessness + Persian poetry – Persian monarchy + Islamic dress code for women – western dress code for women + Islamic names – Persian names, etc.

This, as can be seen, is a particular hybrid combination of the elements of three regimes of truth, distinct from Ayatollah Shariatmadari's voice of cultural Islam (Hiro 2013), Shariati's voice of political Islam (Rahnema 1998), Bazargan's voice of liberal Islam (Chehabi 1990; Bazargan 1984), or Mojahedin's voice of Marxist Islam (Abrahamian 1989), among others.

It should be noted that different voices inhabit various faces depending on particular trajectories of the biographical and genealogical evolution of social assemblages and social faces (individuals, organizations, and groups); the different levels of exposure to the different regimes of truth generate different types of voices and faces (like the voices and faces of Khomeini, Mosaddegh, or the Shah). Thus, in a sense, the faces have become the seats of voices. In 'face' and 'voice' relationship, the faces migrate from one voice to another in a dynamical process where it is not possible to attribute fixed identities to them. Forces, voices, and faces move in a dance of music chair where faces cannot be affiliated to a fixed set of forces and voices, compared to heterogenized or homogenized societies where faces assume more-or-less stable identities via their stable affiliations to stable set of voices and forces and their associated institutions. In the troubled society of Iran, faces frequently convert to alternative set of forces and voices as they encounter novel contexts of situation. Different contexts of situation, even on a daily basis, prime and activate different components of alternative regimes of truth and their emergent hybrid voices. This is manifest in the (in)famous saying of Makhmalbaf, the renowned Iranian filmmaker, where he confessed that:

> I wake up in the morning as Che Guevara, at noon I am Abuzar [the famous disciple of the prophet Mohammad, glamorized by Shariati for the purity of his egalitarian and revolutionary zeal], in the afternoon I am Forough [the distinguished Iranian modernist poet], and in the night Sadegh Hedayat [the prominent anti-Islam and pro-Persian and modernist novelist]. (Mosavi 2013)

This observation applies to almost all Iranian social assemblages who move back and forth nomadically between the boundaries of alternative regimes of truth in various moments of their lives and form bewildering variety of constantly changing cultural tribes as a result. Shariati, for instance, identified his own selfhood as a hybrid combination of Islamic, Greek, and Persian selves (Rahnema 1998: 155).

Therefore, faces become the dynamical texts where forces and voices imprint themselves on. In effect, in such a bewildering state of belated inbetweenness, actions, texts, individuals, organizations, experiences, and events become different social assemblages and sites where warring regimes of truth battle for territory and loyalty. This process establishes the 'confusion' element of Iranian state of belated inbetweenness as an inevitable outcome of Iranian embeddedness, where Iranian *dasein* is a "projective thrownness" (Mulhall 1996: 127; Aho 2009) immersed in the tug of war between alternative regimes of truth, endowed with incommensurable set of truth about life, work, and language.

This throws every Iranian social assemblage (individuals like Banisadr, organizations like Mojahedin Khalgh, groups like the queen Farah's circle and the whole social order) in a state of tri-polarity or "trilemma" (Schellenberg 2013) and constantly "shifting identities" and "fluid hybridity" (Osanloo 2009: 11, 208). The modes and moods of living, thinking and talking 'bifurcate' unpredictably between alternative regimes of truth and their innumerable voices, emanating from countless incidences of hybrid combinations and permutations. In this context, a set of questions may pop up in the form of 'why such a confusion emerges in the first place' and 'why Iranian *dasein* cannot commit oneself irreversibly to one and only one regime of truth and its associated voices or one stable hybrid package of regimes of truth and their affiliated voices'.

This confusion originates from the fact that the Heideggerian fourfold of mortals, gods, the sky, and the earth and their associated brands of rationalities (instrumental, communicative, and emancipative) are conceptualized and packaged differently in each regime of truth. They are linked to the divine experience of Prophet Mohammad and Islamic civilization, to Cyrus the Great and Persian Empire and Persian poetry, and to the Enlightenment figures and philosophies and to Western civilization. These are embedded in different histories, and are emergent outcomes of distinct historical evolutions, and are woven in rival vocabularies and rituals. The potentially infinite ways in which the different elements of these packages of truth can be combined through addition and subtraction create

irreconcilable differences within and between voices and faces (e.g. between the voice of Shariati, Motahhari, and Hossein Nasr). In this state of 'confusion' in the Iranian *dasein* where no fixed identity can be assumed for any Iranian social assemblage, where everyone and every organization is constantly in the process of metamorphosis, we see the working of embeddedness (rootedness), emergence, and incommensurability as three principles constitutive of social phenomena. This state of confusion tends to lead the social actors and analysts frequently to misunderstand the meaning of social phenomena and as such commit the cardinal sins of transference and counter-transference in the inevitable act of cultural psychoanalysis (like in the shocking case of Mojahedin's transformation, at least partially, from an Islamic organization into a Marxist one). In this, the notion of incommensurability calls for seeing the social assemblages (Mojahedin, for instance) as worlds of signification with their particular vocabularies, dictionaries, and their associated denotations and connotations. This calls for understanding of Iranian embedded lifeworld and its associated vocabularies and dictionaries associated with the dynamic and non-linear interplay between the states of inbetweenness and belatedness.

In the next component (tragedy) of the story of the Iranian tragedy of confusion, we will see the working of the principle of emergence more clearly.

Tragedy

The notion of 'tragedy' is meant to hint to the disastrous unintended consequences of individual actions (Poole 2005). In the genre of tragedy, the intentions and actions of characters of the story are secondary to the spontaneous doomed cosmic plot casting its shadow over their social and personal existence. The Greek exposition of tragedy in the story of Antigone and its Iranian counterpart in the story of Rostam and Sohrab where the father kills the son (filicide) unintentionally and unknowingly (Islami Nadoushan 2004: 24–25; Katouzian 2010: 22–24; Dabashi 2011a: 92–93), alongside the notion of tragedy of commons in the economic theory are three examples of a mode of thought and analysis where social catastrophic events are the emergent outcomes of the interactions between embedded forces rather than the intended outcome of conscious faces and their intelligent designs, engaged in the epic struggle between good and evil, right and wrong, and modern and traditional as manifested in the discourses of

transition[3] or the dichotomous or dialectical logics of antagonism and confrontation.[4] As Markell (2003; 74–75; emphasis added) puts it,

> Aristotle makes a famous claim about the relative importance of the constituent parts of tragic drama: "The most important of the six [parts of tragedy]," he says, "is the *combination* of the incidents of the story," for "tragedy is essentially an *imitation not of persons but of action and life*" …. Thus, *for Aristotle, "the first essential, the life and soul, so to speak, of tragedy is the plot," while "characters [e^the^] come second" …; indeed, character is included for the sake of the action rather than the other way around.*

The notion of plot as an imitation of life corresponds to the notion of emergence (and not to the plans cooked in the minds of the social actors). The genre of tragedy (Nietzsche 1999) captures the interaction between the Apollonian force of embeddedness—which gives form and meaning to human existence—and the Dionysian force of emergence—the dynamism inherent to 'being' through its valance (Elster 1998) and its 'power to affect and be affected' (see Parr 2010 on this Deleuzian notion), generating new forms of beings which act as sources of mutation, chaos and disorder in the fabric of embedded and sedimented reality, producing and adding new layers to it. Accordingly, the Iranian embeddedness with its multiple forms of regimes of truth generates emergent and unintended consequences of 'tragedy of confusion', which is enacted in texts of discourses and contexts of strong and weak historical and biographical events.

The concept of 'tragedy of commons' (Ostrom 1990) in economics captures the adverse collective consequences of individually rational actions culminating, for example, in the devastation of natural resources. In the same way, the game of prisoner's dilemma in the game theory is a theoretical device designed to capture the calamitous and unintended collective outcome of the individually rational actions (Dixit et al. 2015). To put it in a game-theoretic language, the invocation of the notion of tragedy

[3] As manifested in the conception of development as structural change based on the shift from tradition to modernity or in the share of three sectors of the economy, like Chenery's and other version of the transition theories from big push to take off, to bottleneck and the rest (Lancaster and van de Walle 2018).

[4] As manifested in all oppositional genres of literatures in the form of antagonism between 'modern and pre-modern' or 'centre versus margin', or 'free versus despotic' or 'oppressive versus progressive' in liberal and neo-conservative theories or theories of post-colonialism and cultural studies alongside orientalism and subaltern literature like Spivak and Said and anti-development literature.

in the context of modern Iranian history is meant to indicate that although the construction of social orders is a coordination game (a potential win-win structure), in the context of Iranian embeddedness, it has turned into a prisoner's dilemma game in the form of a lose-lose structure (Hardin 1995). The coordination game of the Constitutional Revolution, where the cooperation between various layers of elites, people, and the external forces of Russia and Britain was supposed to lead to the generation of a new functional order, culminated in the prisoner's dilemma game of gradual demise of the Constitutional Revolution. The same applies to Reza Shah's, Mosaddegh's, Mohammad Reza Shah's, and Khomeini's projects of social transformation.

The notion of 'tragedy' is closely related to two notions of embeddedness (thrownness) and emergence (projection) and to the fact that social orders are non-linear, adaptive, and messy systems of signification (see Rose and Shulman 2016; Clemens 2013; Beinhocker 2007 for instance), as addressed in the methodological section of this study. In a sense what Iranian *dasein* is suffering from and is at the heart of its 'tragedy of confusion' is the specific nature of its 'projective thrownness'. The doomed cosmic plot, in the context of political economy of truth in Iran, is rooted in the Malinowskian notion of 'context of culture' in its interplay with the 'context of situation'.

The interplay between the two contexts of culture and situation gives rise to the emergence of different projects and subprojects of reverse social engineering whose legitimacy and credibility are perpetually and viciously contested, through episodes of epistemic and/or physical violence, in wars of attrition being waged against alternative truth camps, leading to the erosion of mutual trust and emergence of unstable social order, unable to take any form of stable, synchronized, and harmonized collective action and incapable of consistently pursuing any model of sustainable development. In the continuum of forces and voices, each voice deems itself as pure and unadulterated and others to the left and right of itself as too radical or too pragmatic and embarks on de-legitimizing them incessantly through activation of religious or non-religious brands of discourses of binary oppositions of good against evil by demonizing the radical other and glorifying the self. Almost no force, voice, or face is capable of granting legitimacy to its radical others (like Mojahedin to the Shah and Khomeini, and the other way round) and accepting them as its legitimate interlocutors in the evolutionary process of social production of truth.

As such, our voyage of discovery gives rise to a set of novel concepts such as the notions of 'dysfunctionalities and deformities' alongside the notion of 'zombie' (the return of the repressed, the rerun of forms of life which looked 'dead and buried', 'zombie categories' and 'zombie institutions'; see Bauman 2000: 6; Quiggin 2010), amongst others, to describe the chaotic social order produced by the state of tragedy of confusion.

Intertextuality and Intercontextuality

This section will explore the extent and manifestations of tragedy of confusion in the play of forces permeating and interlinking texts and contexts, in the experiences of intertextuality and intercontextuality. The notion of intertextuality (Allen 2000) represents the dialogue and interconnections between various texts, and the notion of intercontextuality points to the dialogue and interconnection between diverse contexts (for the notion of contextuality, see Dummett 1981; and for the notion of intercontextuality, see Medina 2006: 48–51). Medina (2006: 50, original emphases) states that:

> There is always an elsewhere to which any given context is oriented; in fact there is always a multiplicity of *elsewhere*, composed of past, future, and contemporaneous contexts. In this sense intercontextuality can be described as a kind of *elsewhereness*.

This hints towards viewing events and texts as social assemblages acting as the sites of operation of regimes of truth. Based on the two notions of intertextuality and intercontextuality, we will demonstrate that the current state of socio-economic development in Iran can be explored and understood in the interplay of five texts—the *Quran*, Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, the Hafez Poetry collection (*Divan-e Hafez*), *Resaleh-ye Amaleieh* (the self-help book of collection of Shia rulings) (Shafa 1999), and the Western constitutional and statutory book—and three strong events in the form of French Revolution (Tavakoli-Targhi 1990), the event of revelation to Prophet Mohammad, and Cyrus the Great' s treatment of the Jews in the Achaemenid conquest of Babylon (Brosius 2006: 70; see also Dandamaev and Lukonin 2004). The interaction between these texts and contexts produced the three strong events of Iranian modern history: the Constitutional Revolution, the Oil Nationalization Movement (ONM), and the Islamic Revolution. These texts and contexts are enshrined in the three proto-constitutional treaties affiliated with modernity, orthodox

Persianism, and Shia Islam, namely, Magna Carta, the Cyrus Cylinder, and Imam Ali's letter to Malek-e Ashtar, his newly appointed governor general of Egypt in the years 658–659 AD, respectively (see Amin 2003: 736; Amanat 1997: 71; Foltz 2016: 16). In effect, the Iranian *dasein* has faced three forms of 'mirrors-for-princes' genre of political writings (with their inevitable numerous intermingling) in the shape of Islamic mirrors (Lambton 1980; Boroujerdi 2013), Persianist mirrors, and Western mirrors (see Brague 2007: 119, 159; Tabatabai 1994/2006, 2013).

These are the main textual and contextual sites through which the plays of forces are enacted and manifested.

While the *Quran* and *Resaleh* represent the Islamic dimension with its politics of piety and politics of ordinary (Nasri 2007: 435), the Western statutory book (with its roots in Western philosophy and political philosophy) epitomizes the modern dimension, and *Shahnameh* which is called Persian *Quran* (*Ghoran-e Ajam*) (Islami Nadoushan 2007; Omidsalar 2011, 2012) embodies the regime of truth of Persianism. *Shahnameh* was resembled to the China Wall in its protective function for the cultural empire of Iran (Azmayesh 2001: 7) and in its functioning as a house of being for the Persian dimension of the Iranian *dasein* (Azmayesh 2001: 8–9, 14–15). The collection of Hafez poetry is the most captivating and magnificent hybrid space created by the Iranian *dasein*, striving to combine all historical components of its identity (Iran, Islam, and the Western philosophy) in an organic structure (see Ashouri 2011; Lewisohn 2010; Khorramshahi 1988). Hafez's poetry is the closest terrain where all sides of Iranian identity can feel a sense of belonging and ownership to, which, hence, provokes the fierce turf wars between Iranian contemporary cultural figures such as Kasravi, Ayatollah Motahhari, Shamlu, Ashouri, Khoramshahi, and Kiarostami, among others, over the interpretation and ownership of this space. Ali Ferdowsi (2008: 670) alludes to this fact in the following terms:

> This apperception of Hafiz is not restricted to any particular group or ideological tendency. From the most ardent Aryanist nationalists to the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic the notion of the intimate bind between Hafiz and the national spirit of Iran is shared, even as they disagree over the essence and source of this connection.

Ferdowsi (2008: 691) further adds that:

> Hafiz and his Divan have become the foci of a shared national sentiment that gather Iranians of various stripes, from zealot religionists to ardent secularists, into an imagined community of spiritual patrimony.

Consequently Hafez, as Davis (2012) maintains, "comes closest to being all things to all readers". Ultimately, as Steward (2017: 213) attests, "The words of Ferdowsi, Sa'di, Hafez, Rumi, and Khayyam are not simply regarded as poetic texts, but are a worldview for Iranians."

It should be noted that the 'Blind Owl' or *Boof-e Koor* (1989), the famous novel of the renowned Iranian novelist Sadegh Hedayat (see Katouzian 2008), is the modern battleground where the interaction between historical forces of Islam and Persianism is portrayed as the relationship between a death-bound old man (Islam) and a heavenly girl (pre-Islamic Persia) in the context of a modern form of literature, novel (see Ajodani 2006). In this work, the play of puritanism and pragmatism alongside the hybrid, monstrous, and bastard movements in thought and action is displayed in the character of *Lakkateh* (the loose woman, the whore) who represents the rhizomatic and contradictory nature of 'the real' of Iranian social existence, manifesting the intermingling and co-existence of conflicting ways of thinking, talking, being, and becoming. In the site of this surreal masterpiece, modernity acts as the context (context of belatedness) in which the conflict between Persianism, modernity, and Islam is enacted (state of inbetweenness). Hedayat's use of modern medium of novel, as the unspoken and given background of the interaction, mirrors the universal dominance of modernity as the global context of interaction in all forms of textual and non-textual encounters.[5]

Hedayat's 'Blind Owl' (1989) provides a rich textual contemporary terrain and a 'wondrous world' (Katouzian 2008), alongside Hafez's classical collection of poetry, where the forces of Western modernity, Islam and Persianism battle over defining what Iranian *dasein* (Iranianness) is or can be (Shayegan 2014; Dabashi 2012, 2013; Mirsepassi and Faraji 2016; Shakibi 2016). Thus, different forces and their associated voices and social movements can be mapped in this space by changing who the character of the heavenly girl represents and who the force of death and decay is and what kind of background we should be interacting in. Ayatollah Khomeini (see Dinani 2010; Algar 1999; Moin 1999) in his special version of "politics of piety", for example, views Islam as the heavenly girl being gradually suffocated by the forces of Persianism (which prioritizes common ancestry and history over the emancipatory and liberating force of faith) and modernity (in its godlessness and excessive materialism and nihilism) and

[5] See Rajaee 2006, on the double function of modernity as the dominant civilization and as a contesting culture in the melting pot of rival cultures.

contests the global and universal dominance of modernity as the hegemonic civilizational background and attempts to replace it with a modern civilizational form of Islam.

The interaction between purity and authenticity of angelic goodness embodied in the character of the heavenly girl (whether it is deemed as pure Islam, pure modernity, or pure Persianism as we mentioned in the notion of the white book) and the deathly, despicable character of the old man (whether it is violent and backward Islam or decadent and pernicious modernity or chauvinist or irrational Persianism, which is, in this study, already captured by the notion of the black book) and the impurity and looseness of pragmatism captured in the character of *Lakkateh* (*see* Mashallah Ajodani 2006: 73–78) can provide us with a contemporary site to map the dynamics at work in the modern history of Iran and its tragedy of confusion. The hazy and dreamy atmosphere of the novel generated by a "chaotic imagination" (Mohaghegh 2010) recreates the confusion, dissonance, and chaos experienced in all realms of Iranian social existence, mirroring the dreamy and surreal nature of Iranian social reality as captured in the quote from Ibrahim Beig, in the Movahhed's notion of 'confused dreams', or in Foucault's notion of 'confused voices'. The disturbances in social reality and subjectivity, in texts and contexts, reproduce each other in a hall of mirrors. Hedayat with his connections to Khayyam (see Aminrazavi 2005; Dinani 2011), with his famous life-affirming celebration of 'here and now' as opposed to the faith's death-affirming celebration of 'hereafter', further brings into sharp contrast the modern and Persianist spirits with the Islamic one. Shayegan (2012) refers to how these multiple texts, from Hafez to Kant, worked on him and through him, each striving to operate as "the" grid of intelligibility for his understanding of life, work, and language.

The Islamic Revolution displays the victory of the regime of truth of Islam and its project of Islamization (with its own three subprojects), the force of Islamic revivalism and its attempt to shape the terrain of national and international orders by taming the forces of modernity and Persianism and bringing them in the service of restoration of the golden age of Islam.[6]

[6] It is worth emphasizing that in the state of belated inbetweenness every regime of truth is inevitably instrumentalized to achieve fast and furious social transformation due to the traumatic dominance of "now" imagination (like the Shah's instrumentalization of socialism and Islam). As such, the analyses like Platteau's (2011, 2017) talking about instrumentalization of Islam as a hindrance to achieving democracy or development need to be incorporated within a wider framework of belated inbetweenness. The whole of the literature exploring the relation between culture or religion and development (Platteau and Peccoud 2011; Kuran 2011, 2018) may need to be placed within this wider theoretical framework.

In the Constitutional Revolution and the ONM, 'the idea of' modernity' took the centre stage, while in the Pahlavi order 'the idea of' pre-Islamic Persia' found official currency. There is an intercontextual dialogue interlinking between these strong events as each is a reaction to the lacks and failures of the other. There is also an intertextual dialogue between the main texts of Iranian history; *Shahnameh*, for instance, is in constant dialogue with the Quran and *Resaleh* alongside the statute book of modernity with its theoretical underpinnings while striving to revive the Persian monarchy, Persian language and the wisdom of Persian religions, Persian forms of life and civilization. In a Derridian sense, there is nothing but the text as the text finds its way into the context and the context is fed back into the text (of course in a Lacanian-Zizekian sense, there is always the order of 'real' beyond the text which disrupts the text's web of symbolic and imaginary orders).

This process of being torn between rival forces, however, is not unique to the Iranian mind and Iranian social reality. It is true that its particular features are unique to the Iranian case, but it shares a set of common features with a larger set of cases investigated under the topic of multiple selves.

Multiple Selves (Politics of Mind: Individual as an Unstable Coalition)

Ainslie (2001, see also Hanson 2009) has developed an account of people as communities of internal bargaining interests, in which subunits enshrining short-term, medium-term, and long-term interests face various conflicts with each other that they must resolve. This is a kind of reincarnation of the Freudian thesis of divided self (between id, ego, and superego) (Lester 2015). In a sense, as elaborated by Critchley (2010: 104), individual is 'dividual', and politics of the brain and politics of the society are mirror images of each other in their property of being divided (Hunter 2014). If social assemblages at micro, meso, or macro levels fail to overcome their internal conflicts and achieve stable outcomes, the ones who manage to do so will succeed to outperform them in the competition for scarce resources, as America manages to outperform Somalia.

In the internal conflict within the self, the device of the Hobbesian leviathan is unavailable to the brain. Therefore, its behaviour (when system-level psychosis and insanity is avoided) is a sequence of self-enforcing equilibriums

of the sort studied by game-theoretic public choice literature on coalitional bargaining in democratic legislatures. That is, the internal politics of the brain entails 'logrolling' (give and take) (Mueller 2003: 110; Stratmann 1997: 322). These internal dynamics are then partly regulated and stabilized by the wider social games in which coalitions (people as wholes over temporal subparts of their biographies) are embedded (Ross 2005: 334–353). In a sense, the politics of external social mind (Clark's and Chalmers' (1998) extended mind) sets up the games and agenda for the politics of internal individual brain. In a Deleuzian sense, these binary oppositions of internal/external, social/individual are artificial and misleading as the internal is the fold of the external and individual is the name of the collective. This explains, as Ross (2010, emphasis added) attests,

> why it is in the context of stable institutions with relatively transparent rules that people most resemble straightforward economic agents like insects, and that classical game theory finds reliable application to them as cohesive units. **The message is that stable institutions produce stable selves, but the fundamental question is "Where does this context of stable institutions come from in the first place?" and "Why can some countries and communities manage to construct a set of stable institutions and others cannot?"**

This study endogenizes and addresses the two highly critical questions raised by Ross in the above passage.

Following Ainslie's logic, the formation of identity and a unified selfhood is an exercise in the art of coalition formation in the context of multiple selves. In a wider sense, the formation of unity and identity for any social assemblage at any level (individual, organization, or nation) is an exercise in the art of coalition formation, as part of the Deleuzian process of territorialization and de-territorialization. It is interesting that we can identify the same dynamics at work in the Iranian mind. We can allude to modernity as constituting the short-term subunit of the Iranian selfhood, Persianism constituting the medium-term component of the Iranian selfhood, and Islam constituting the long-term element of the Iranian selfhood, where the same dynamics of logrolling and striving for forging coalitions of different shapes and kinds is at work inside the Iranian selfhood (and its subjectivity and preference structure) and in the society at large.

The Composition of *Dasein*

To elaborate on how this trinity of regimes of truth (similar to the trinity in the Christian theology, our trinity is full of impossibilities and contradictions) is deeply instituted in the Iranian selfhood and how it turns into alternative identity markers and choice bundles and in a move from the unconscious level of background to the conscious level of choice, we start from the fact that for Heidegger (1962) our being-in-the-world (our worldhood) is characterized by the interplay of four components: the Heideggerian fourfold of mortals, gods, the sky, and the earth, implying the fact that human being (*dasein*) is an spatiotemporal being, a being-towards-the-end. The Heideggerian *dasein* is a spatiotemporal being with bounded rationality as opposed to the Cartesian *cogito* who is an abstract, boundless, and timeless thinking machine casting its panoptical gaze on the events of the material world. Due to its finitude, *dasein* is encapsulated in its spatiotemporality; it is something that has a beginning and an end; it is an embedded and embodied form of corporeality and virtuality (Deleuze 1990; Grimshaw 2014). Due to its having an origin, its being rooted in something else, it is ingrained in its past which defines its embeddedness, and due to its having an end, it is a projection into future.

It should be noted that *dasein* is mortal in its existence; its being is abyssal (see Almond 2004, Chapter 4 on 'abyssality of being') from both ends, and as a mortal, its being is defined by its contrast to the immortals and its relation to the sky as its horizon of being and the earth as its spatiotemporal "house of being" (Heidegger 1958: 20, 26). The earth relates self to its beginning, its incommensurable embeddedness, and the sky to its emergence, as the open horizon of its being-towards. *Dasein*, hence, is the site where the principles of embeddedness, incommensurability, and emergence operate. That is why *dasein* is a 'projected thrownness' or a 'thrown projection'. This conception of man as *dasein* takes us to the intertemporal choices it faces inside rival conceptions of time. As Aho (2009: 18) puts it,

> For Heidegger, Dasein must ultimately be understood in terms of temporality, as the twofold movement of "thrown projection," which represents the frame of reference on the basis of which things can light up as intelligible or remain dark and unintelligible. "Ecstatic temporality," says Heidegger, "originally lights/clears (*lichtet*) the there" (BT, 402). This temporal framework is referred to as "Care" (*Sorge*), an expression that represents the basic ground of intelligibility, a ground that is prior to das Man and is constituted by the fact that Dasein is always "ahead-of-itself-already-in-(the-world) as being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)" (BT, [*Being and Time*] 237).

As we see, self is as an event or happening, an emergence, an unfolding event of this world, between two indefinite points of birth and death, which makes it into a being-towards. *Dasein*'s being is 'directionality', and 'care' towards a (in)definite birth (where and when did I really originate from? Maybe in the beginning of time) and a certain but indefinite death (see White 2005). *Dasein* is a 'now' originated and directed towards an embeddedness of the past and a projection, emergence, and openness of the future.

The whole dynamics of spatiotemporality of *dasein* locates and interweaves the temporality of *dasein* in a fabric of finitude and infinitude, mortality and immortality, and permanence and impermanence. Embeddedness points to the fact that we are born in a world of signification, which clears and discloses things to 'social assemblages' (Connolly 2008) in a specific and particular way through placing him/her/it in a signifying chain and through the act of disclosure and signification that constitutes them and makes them what they are. This world of signification invests in the self a narrative of beginning and end, and how 'now' is related to these abyssal points of no return. As such *dasein* is nothing but time, even space is time or a continuum of space-time. As Aho (2009: 62) puts it, "Dasein is not a being that moves along in time. Rather, Dasein—as an already opened clearing of intelligibility—is time."

This world of signification, the regime of truth, makes sense of what it means to be 'a now' extended into 'a past' and 'a future', 'a being-towards'. The embeddedness of the past makes the 'being' of my 'being-towards' and the projection and emergence of the future makes the 'towards' of my 'being-towards', which together in the chain of past-present-future constitutes my being-towards as an event, a happening. Death, in its indefinite certainty, defines the open horizon of my being and that is why in Heideggerian term my being is a being-towards-death. In the Islamic conception, *dasein* is a being-beyond-death (see Mahmoud 2007: 13); this is manifest in Ayatollah Khomeini's reversal of the customary formulation of the life-death equation: "Dying does not mean nothingness: it is life" (Brumberg 2001: 125).

The Composition of Iranian *Dasein*

The subtle point here is that there are no universal points of birth and death, beginning and end; our world of signification (our embeddedness) makes sense of what our births and our deaths and the events in between mean. In

the language of Lacan, birth and death are events of 'the real', parts of a-signifying chain of being, where 'the symbolic' and 'the imaginary' orders determine the quality and 'what-ness' of our encounters with the events of 'the real'; they name them, signify them through making them part of a signifying chain, and house them in a house of being. Through different worlds of signification acting on different conceptions, enactment, and disclosure of time, the Iranian *dasein* is invested with diverse beginnings and multiple ends and different continuum of beginnings and ends.

The Persian world of signification connects our birth to the emergence and evolution of the Aryan people, where a story of creation is narrated as related to the creation of Aryan people and how they came to inhabit a particular geo-political space in a particular time and how their way of life, their language, their polity and economy, their religion and civilization, and their mythology evolved in contradistinction to the non-Aryan people (*Eranshahr* "the Realm of the Aryans" versus non-Iran (*an-Iran*), Daryaee 2009) and how our death is signified as death of an Iranian with a particular glorious and majestic history and a heritage bequeathed to the next generation of the Iranians (see Katouzian 2010; Savant 2013). Our births and deaths, thus, are projected in a timeline of the Persian beginning and end. Here our birth and death—which in themselves are part of a-signifying chain of being in the register of 'real'—are made sense of (placed in a signifying chain) through their connection to a particular community of people and their evolution in the continuum of time-space. This particular world of signification constitutes the medium self of the multiple selves of Iranian *dasein*. Our medium selves are configured through their connections to the 'idea of Iran' (Gnoli 1989; Mohammadi Malayeri 1996–2003; Savant 2013).

In contrast, the Iranian short-term self is located in a signifying chain narrating the birth of modernity (Bayly 2004) and how it is rooted in the Roman and Greek culture and civilizations, and in affirmative or negating relation with Christianity (Kulikowski 2016) and Islam (and hence the Middle East) and how it has been part of the Iranian self through the intense entanglement of the Persian self with the Greek and Roman others in the dynamics of the binary opposition of Iran/*an-Iran* and the presence of Zoroastrian Persian philosophy (Corbin 1993) in Greek philosophy and the heightened trace of Greek philosophy in the heavily Persianized Islamic rationality (Legenhausen 2007: 173; Ashouri 2005), and the invasion of Western modernity in our lifeworld in the last 400 years and its intense presence in the last 200 years.

The short-term self is embedded in 'the idea of modernity', supplying peace and prosperity in its motherlands through adherence to techno-scientific rationality creating a techno-scientific utopia (future as its land of utopia). Modernity specializes in offering increasing levels of freedom from the despotism of nature. In the modern narrative, my being is a now which is connected to nothingness of a distant past (ground zero of Cartesian *cogito*) and a techno-scientific heaven of an unfolding future. Modernity defines itself in opposition to the long-term horizon of death and its afterwards as John Maynard Keynes famously said, "In the long-run we are all dead" (Mann 2017). Death is foreclosed to modernity and constitutes the core of its unthought. The pursuit of the pleasures of the flesh and enlightened self-interests is the main purpose of existence, and science and technology are the main ways to achieve it and prolong it against the forces of nature such as diseases, aging, and scarcity. Scientific reasoning, liberal democracy, human rights, capitalism, and the welfare state are the most promising avenues discovered by the modern mankind to ever higher levels of techno-scientific prowess (techno-scientific heaven on earth).

Islam configures our long-term self by locating our births and deaths in a story of creation where life originates from an impeccable fullness and descends into lesser forms of beings. In this conception, life is light, lights upon lights, layers of lights, stemming from the fullest light, the light of lights. In this narrative embedded in discursive and non-discursive practices, life originates from fullness and infinitude and returns to it. This is a story of a fall and a return and the story of the prophets who were missioned to show the way to salvation and emancipation from the finitude and darkness of the lesser forms of light, and the terrors of invisibility, vulnerability, loss, failure, rejection, and death. This story positions Iranian *dasein* in yet another chain of signification and imagination. This life and the next are part of the same fabric of eternal being, and this life is nothing but a fleeting moment in the eternal theatre of existence. In this regime of truth, the distinction between now and then, short and long term, evaporates as we are already located in the fabric of eternity. The Quran warns mankind that this life is only half a day or less in the time scale of eternity. The connection to eternal and everlasting is the prominent feature of the Islamic long-term self of the Iranian *dasein*. The long-term self is configured through "the idea of Islam".

These three forms of being-towards-death through 'the idea of modernity', 'the idea of Persia', and 'the idea of Islam' characterize the Iranian *dasein*'s multiple selves. In the framework of modernity, the birth of some-

thing truly new starts at the end of the eighteenth century (Bayly 2004) and genealogically goes back to twelfth-century Magna Carta and further back negatively to Christianity and affirmatively to the Roman and Greek civilizations and further flashbacks to Homo-Sapiens in Africa, and the emergence of life on earth and the emergence of earth itself and to the big bang and multiverse. However, for Persianism, the true time starts from the time of Aryan people inhabiting the Iranian plateau and their ancestral kings and mythical figures of Iranian mythology and the connection to the eternal time of Ahura Mazda and Ahriman (here the emphasis is on the history of Aryan people as distinguished from the other peoples rather than the story of creation itself; in a way the story of creation is told as a way to populate the world with Persian and non-Persian peoples). As for the Islamic narrative, time is truly everlasting and eternal and the piece of time we inhabit, although humanly extremely significant, in the grand scheme of things is infinitely minuscule and insignificant compared to the vastness and enormity of eternal time. These layers of time constitute the poly-temporality and multi-layered being of Iranian *dasein*.

In the language of Chakrabarty (2000: 243), hence, Iranian *dasein* is trapped in a 'timeknot' (see Ajodani 2006: 148, for the same phenomenon, "*naahamzamani va darhamzamani*", in Hedayat's works). As *dasein* is time, Iranian *dasein* is multiple forms of contradictory and conflicting forms of time, each pressing its own demands on his/her/its being. As Lacan (1988: 193), when redeployed to fit into our context, puts it: "the [Iranian] subject is always on several levels, caught up in crisscrossing networks". The 'trembling' and sometimes 'horrifying' effects of the images and statements made in the Quran, for instance, puts Iranian *dasein* on a different plate of space-time. It warns the believers that this life is not more than half a day and that when everything meets its end the blanket of regret and the burning wish to return to compensate for the wrong deeds will be the biggest torments for the ignorant souls.

It further produces images of rewards and punishments, associated with their pious or sinful deeds, and warns the believers of falling into the trap of becoming ignorantly busy with the accumulation of wealth, children, and status in this passing and transient world at the expense of forgetting their own eternal happiness. In the Quranic discourse, raining daily on people through different platforms in Iran, God is a site of combination of opposites in being the beginning and the end, the appearance and the substance, and a transcendental immanence (Almond 2004: 61), and is closer to man than the veins in his neck.

Discourses like these which are iterated and reiterated through their "economy of exemplary iterability" (Derrida 1992: 43), and are in circulation in different social landscapes, while becoming part of everyday cheap talks of the nation, can transform Iranian *dasein* from one mood/mode into another in a blink of an eye. Iranian *dasein*, therefore, is called to attune itself with alternative discursive homelands (for the notion of attunement, see Haar 2002). Heidegger conceptualizes understanding as attunement, and Iranian *dasein* becomes confused due to alternative demands and requirements made on him to attune his being with (seemingly) irreconcilable and incommensurable universes of knowledge and power.

The shocking ontological news reported by the Islamic founding fathers, as recounted in Almond (2004: 113), puts the Iranian *dasein* on the plane of eternity: "All men are asleep in this world; only when they die do they wake up." The awareness of dreamy nature of material existence calls for "lifting of the veil of ignorance", which requires "love of the Absolute" (Schimmel 1975: 4). In the same vein, when Ayatollah Khomeini (2010: 113) offers his vision of the ontological and deontological composition of this world through his speech acts, indicating that "universe is the seat of presence of God, do not commit sins in the presence of God", which used to appear on the advertising boards and walls throughout the country, the intensity and shock value of the insight, compared to the visions offered by modernity or Persianism on their advertising boards, shakes Iranian *dasein* to the core. This turns the Iranians into beings entangled in a daily voyage between parallel universes housed in packages and master signifiers of Islam, Persianism, and modernity.

The Islamic regime of truth, thus, offers a regime of training and discipline to keep the believer from deviating into the wild temptations of pleasures of the flesh through committing to the codes of Islamic morality and jurisprudence. Elster's (2000) constraint theory reveals the rationale behind such programmes of constraints based on the possibility of addiction to harmful substances (see also Ainslie 2001). Here for Islam the addictive pernicious substances are modernity and Persianism.

In the Islamic discourse, the excessive and ignorant pursuit of pleasures of the flesh with its transient, impermanent, and decaying qualities prevents the believer from attaining liberation from the terror of death. Rajaee (2007: 13–14) points to the hold such a regime of constraints has on the Iranian *dasein*:

> Here lies the root of the inseparability of religion and politics in Islam. An average Muslim, therefore, by the sheer dictates of his faith, must be both secular—that is, concerned with the profane and serious about worldly affairs—and religious—that is, pious and free from worldly attachment—while remaining aware that "the world is the cultivating ground for the hereafter" (ad-Donya Mazrʿa al-Akhera). In other words, the average Muslim should be a saint in addition to whatever else he does: a saint-merchant, a saint-soldier, a saint-politician, a saint-doctor, a saint-professor, and so on, combining the idealism of what ought to be with the realism of what actually is.

In the Islamic regime of truth, thus, the Iranian *dasein* is tasked with achieving a form of complementarity between this-worldly and next-worldly concerns by investing heavily in the activities of this world to achieve spiritual growth and salvation from fear of death and eternal happiness in the next world.

As such, the believer is encouraged to engage intensely in the activities of this world from sexuality to economy, and polity, and art and culture, and sport, as grounds where he/she can practise his religious commitment to attain spiritual excellence. This task requires living a life of apparent contradiction in simultaneous engagement with different layers of time as demanded from the believer in the following saying of Imam Hassan: "Plan for this world as if you expect to live forever; but plan for the hereafter as if you expect to die tomorrow" or in another version "Do for this life as if you live forever, do for the afterlife as if you die tomorrow". The believer is, hence, charged with reconciling (seemingly) irreconcilable positions in order to be able to attain salvation or *falah* at both levels of existence. This appears to be the coping strategy evolved to overcome the terror of death without harming the level and intensity of engagement with the profane, or paradoxically a programme of achieving salvation through intense engagement with the material world. The task is to invite the sacred in without quitting the profane, or remove the duality of sacred/profane in the first place. This was an embedded way to coordinate three forms of instrumental, communicative, and emancipative rationalities.

This philosophy was manifested in the post-revolutionary era in the Jihad for Construction (*jihad-e sazandegi*) (Shakoori 2001), for instance, where an army of volunteers inspired by ethics of service were organized by the new revolutionaries to rebuild the country, especially the infrastructure

in the rural and deprived areas.[7] This is what was termed by Foucault as a form of "political spirituality" in his comments on the initial phases of the Iranian Revolution of 1979. As Raffnsøe et al. (2016: 440) maintain, "In a discussion held on the 10th anniversary of another revolt—the May 1968 protests in France—Foucault suggests that the central aspect of such a political spirituality is "the will to discover a different way of governing oneself through a different way of dividing up true and false"." This was due to Foucault's conviction that, as Ghamari-Tabrizi (2016: 192) attests, "Enlightenment rationality has not closed the gate of unknown possibilities for human societies". According to Badiou (Hallward 2003), this is at the heart of the political, the site of the emergence of new truth.

Death and Selfhood

To demonstrate how these philosophical understandings are directly related to the analysis of concrete historical realities, we resort to the subtle observation made by Frye (2005) in the book '*The Greater Iran*' on the critical role of 'death' in understanding civilizations. Frye observes that civilization is a response to the problematic of death and different civilizations address it differently (see also Shayegan 2007, and Bourdieu's exposition of Pascalian meditations on the issue of death, 2000). Frye (2005: xiii) addresses the issue in the following terms:

> If asked to explain the history of world civilizations in one word it would be 'death'. Of all animals man alone knows he will die, and this has fashioned his approach to life, and indeed to all existence.

Frye perceives different civilizations as different coping strategies evolved to handle the issue of awareness of death (see also Cave 2012).

[7] The reason this revolutionary movement, which could serve as the Iranian version of Protestantism, failed or is perceived to have failed has less to do with its content and form and more to do with the lack of consensus on its content and form. Any project of transformation from the liberal Constitutional Revolution or the ONM to the developmentalist of Amir Kabir, Rafsanjani, or the Pahlavi shahs to the emancipatory Islamic one could have succeeded if it had been based on an emergent consensus, which in the state of belated inbetweenness is almost impossible. The emergence of what Foucault saw as the age of terror and religious despotism in the post-revolutionary period in Iran, where "hands being chopped off today, after having been against the tortures of the SAVAK yesterday" (Raffnsøe et al. 2016: 442, footnote, 47), is the effect of irreconcilable differences inherent to the state of belated inbetweenness. In the state of belated inbetweenness, every single project of reverse social engineering of any colour or persuasion fails or becomes dysfunctional.

Furthermore, the insights from two Beckers may shed more light on the centrality of the phenomenon of death in establishing how these three types of worlds of significations or regimes of truth turn into three types of selves and then into three types of choice bundles or identity markers. One Becker resides in cultural anthropology, Ernest Becker (1973), and the followers of his research programme in Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Goldenberg et al. 2000; Burke et al. 2010), and another in economics, Gary Becker (1996), and his followers in economics of family, human capital, economics of religion (Iannaccone 1995, 1998, 2006), and household-allocation-of-time models. Goldenberg et al. (2000: 201) maintain that:

> Cultural worldviews assuage the terror associated with the fear of death by providing answers to fundamental cosmological questions such as How did I get here?, How should I live my life?, and What happens after I die?, structuring perceptions of reality (*e.g.*, clocks, calendars, tarot cards, and horoscopes), and providing standards through which individuals and their behaviour can be evaluated and perceived as meaningful and valuable.

In line with this, Azzi and Ehrenberg (1975: 512) emphasize on the role of the afterlife motive in their seminal paper on religious participation, maintaining that:

> There is one crucial element … that distinguishes an analysis of religious participation from an analysis of participation in other activities. …household participation in church-related activities should be analyzed in the context of a multiperiod household-allocation-of-time model which allows for "afterlife consumption," with this variable being at least partially a function of the household's investment of members' time in religious activities during their lifetimes.

Based on this long-term view of the continuum of this life and the next, Islam, as main defining component of the long-term self in the Iranian context of culture, acts as a distinct choice bundle offering wide range of cultural products and symbolic goods in contradistinction to the classic Persian identity, as the main component of the medium-term self, and modernity, as the main constitutive part of the short-term self.

Regarding the distinctive character of Islam (and most religions) as the space of permanence, a regime of truth, and a multi-product manufacturer of supernatural commodities, Iannaccone (2006: 21–22) maintains that:

> A fundamental characteristic of religion is that it constitutes a uniquely general technology. There is literally nothing that falls beyond the theoretical limits of supernatural production and exchange. Consider the consequences. People call on religion for everything: health, wealth, salvation, power, long life, immortality, eternal bliss, military victory, and even good sex. Major religious traditions thus evolve into immense systems of beliefs, behavior, and institutions with links to every conceivable human activity and concern. Strong religious organizations almost never specialize in just a few niche products or a few niche needs. Diversity of output … mirrors the advantages of product bundling. … many different types of people can be persuaded to join and remain loyal to a religious group that offers members an array of benefits, including, for example, intense camaraderie, status, honor, identity, purpose, an exalted calling, dramatic rituals, powerful emotional experiences, and the prospect of heavenly rewards.

Iannaccone (2006: 19) further suggests that:

> One may seriously question a cleric's claims that action "A" will lead to afterlife reward "R," but this much is sure: no strictly secular system can offer any hope of "R" at all.

What can be inferred from Iannaccone's analysis is that religion creates a space of permanence—what he calls "the supernatural content of many religious "technologies"" as "the defining feature of religion" (Iannaccone 2006: 19)—alongside its holistic nature as a regime of truth which he tries to capture via the economic notion of "product bundling" and the fact that it offers *jouissance* and experience of fullness which transcends the normal logic of cost-benefit analysis and is reflected in his use of adjectives such as "intense", "exalted", "dramatic", "powerful", and "heavenly" in his description of benefits offered by religion (this is what modernity also offers via sex, drug, alcohol, and rock and roll alongside sanitized forms of the eureka in the experience of scientific discovery, arts and literature, or sports and the Westernized version of Eastern spirituality). This reaffirms Taylor's (2007: 10) identification of religion as the space of "experience of fullness" which is fully supported by the mystical dimension at the heart of almost all religions alongside their philosophical and legal facets (see Freud 1929: 2, for the notion of "oceanic feeling" and his 1922 work for the notion of "beyond pleasure principle"; see also Parsons 1999).

Iranian *dasein* is embedded in the spatiotemporal space created by the intersection and interface of three lifeworlds of Islam, classic Persian

Empire, and modernity. Iranian *dasein* lives and negotiates his/her/its life in the space between spaces. In this state of inbetweenness, its 'order of real' is a rhizomatic movement of abundance in the plane of hybridity and multiplicity, while its 'order of symbolic' has been struggling to construct a legitimate discursive and non-discursive house of being for such hyper-rich forms of 'real'. Failing to build such a harmonized symbolic package, various 'imaginary' totalizing projects have emerged to solve the problem once for all. Iranian *dasein* is care; it cares about all these three wondrous worldhoods, and its body and mind, emotions, and thoughts are woven through and into these worlds.

These various forms of worldhood go far beyond conscious choices and envelope all layers of conscious and unconscious being and becoming. They are not variables, they are lifeworlds creating and affecting all variables. *Dasein* as care is more than choice and consciousness; care is about fabric of being and condition of possibility of action and emotion, cognition and affection, disclosure and foreclosure. As Hoy (2009: 64) puts it:

> the worldhood of the world is the way that the world presents itself, the way in which the whole is disclosed. Worldhood is prior to objectivity, and makes objectivity possible. No worldhood, no objects. Worldhood is … that which makes it possible for content to appear as content, that is, as a feature of the world.

This state of intense, engulfing, and overwhelming entanglement with incommensurable set of lifeworlds characterizes the Iranian sate of 'tragedy of confusion'.

The Level of Analysis

This section aims to demonstrate that one of the implications of the tragedy of confusion is the fact that for theorization of the rise and fall of various forms of top-down or bottom-up revolutions and movements in Iran, we need to move from the level of prices, governance, and institution to the level of regimes of truth. It is worth noting that this study does not intend to be a chronological history of any event of the Iranian modern history; rather, it strives to offer a novel theoretical reading of it.

The Constitutional Revolution of 1906, for instance, is known to be a revolution for the establishment of rule of law as manifested in the demand for an order in which "the shah and the beggar will be equal within the

confines of the law" (Enayat 2013: 1). The following part of Afghani's (1892: 241) speech in London succinctly captures the spirit of the time:

> [Afghani was giving a report of his visit to Persia] The people gathered around me as about their deliverer. "A code of law! A code of law!" was all their cry; "no matter what, only some law; we have no law, no courts of justice, no security of life and property; let us be taxed, squeezed, and oppressed in moderation; but let us have some law and we will submit!.

Based on this fact and the fact that the recent Reformist Movement and Green Movement in Iran had practically the same demands as the Constitutional Revolution (see Dabashi 2011b; Afary 2013), we can arrive at the conclusion that the analysis of Iranian backwardness, both at the level of history and historiography, has not yet managed to finally cut the king's head, as Foucault (1980, 102) suggests: "We must eschew the model of Leviathan in the study of power." The analysis frequently gets fixated at the level of politics, the rule of law, the state, and the consciousness, while this level of analysis at best covers the three Williamson's (2000) levels of prices, governance, and institutions without entering the level of extended mind and its associated continuum of unconscious/conscious regime of truth and background everydayness.

The contrast between the levels of truth and law is evident in the following piece from Seyyed Jamal al-Din Va'ez Isfahani, one of the leading lights of the Constitutional Revolution, as reported in Katouzian (2011: 764):

> People! Nothing would develop your country other than subjection to law, observation of law, preservation of law, respect for law, implementation of the law, and again law, and once again law.

Here in Va'ez Isfahani's interpretation, as well as Katouzian's, the socio-economic development of the country depends on the establishment of rule of law, while the establishment of rule of law requires, in Foucault's conception, the production of truth, which itself acts as the condition of possibility for the creation of wealth. If we delve deeper at the pre-requisites of the establishment of law, we arrive at the level of production of truth; in Williamson's terms, we move from the level of prices, governance, and institution to the level of mind.

In a brief assessment of the failure of the Constitutional Revolution and other attempts for modernizations in Iran, Katouzian (2000, 2011, 2012)

puts the blame on such vague notions as 'cultural roots', 'habits', and the like, which is evident in the following statement that "the old habits of discord and lack of social cohesion and cooperation, and the attitude of total gain or total loss—in short, the politics of elimination—was too ingrained to make peaceful developments possible" (Katouzian 2011: 773). Here Katouzian resorts to such notions as 'old habits of discord', 'lack of social cohesion and cooperation', and the 'politics of elimination' as being too 'ingrained' without adequately theorizing them. This study hopes to be a right step in the direction of filling this considerable gap in the level of theorization in answering the questions such as why things are the way they are; why in the Iranian context old habits die hard and are not replaced by new habits, while in other historical contexts habits clearly do change (Iranians themselves changed their habit of practising Zoroastrianism or agrarian mode of production, for instance, and other nations changed their habit of despotism to new habit of democracy in various time windows), why there is not adequate level of social cohesion amongst Iranians, and why some things become ingrained and others do not. As such, there is an urgent need for a theory of "cultural roots", "habits", "lack of social cohesion", and "politics of elimination".

In actual fact, Va'ez Isfahani, in the rest of the above passage, as reported in Katouzian (2011: 764), refers to the level of regime of truth explicitly without being able to term it as such:

> Children must from childhood read and learn at schools that no sin in religion and the shari'eh is worse than opposing the law… Observing religion means law, religion means law, Islam, the Koran, mean God's law. My dear man, qanun, qanun. Children must understand, women must understand, that the ruler is law and law alone, and no one's rule is valid but that of the law. The parliament is the protector of law… The legislative assembly and legislature is the assembly which makes law, the sultan is the head of the executive which implements the law. The soldier is defender of the law, the police is defender of the law, justice means law, prosperity means implementing the law, the independence of the monarchy means rules of the law. In a word, the development of the country, the foundation of every nationality, and the solidarity of every nation arises from the implementation of the law.

Here he moves to the deeper level of making respect for law and understanding of it as part of women's and children's subjectivities and daily discursive and non-discursive practices, where the defiance of law is treated as sin. He resorts to the notion of sin and cardinal sin, which is a very

entrenched notion in the Shia theology, its moral and legal formulations, and its mechanisms of reward and punishment.

Alongside Islam he refers to the notion of *majlis* and monarchy and the institutions of modern state like police and army. Thus, he brings the two regimes of modernity and Persianism into the equation as well. To entrench the culture of respect for law and achieve the culture of law-abiding citizenry requires the deeper engagement at discursive and non-discursive level (engaging with the Heideggerian fourfold) and the level of affectivity and emotional economy, as people need to feel guilt and shame (like the loss of sexual honour which brings the sense of shame) if the disregard for law is supposed to be experienced as sin. This needs to be complemented with the cultivation of the sense of joy and pride in being a law-abiding citizen and society alongside the experience of being rewarded eternally and materially in the case of law abidance.

As such, the entire social order comes into play, requiring a cultural revolution, which in turn requires deep and sustained engagement of the clergy, the intelligentsia, and the Persian literati and monarchy to reconcile deep differences on who has the right to legislate and what the ontological, epistemological, methodological, aesthetic, and moral axes of such acts of legislation are. There is also an urgent and pressing need for the development of a collective dialogue on the issues such as property rights, freedom, justice, equality, sexuality (nudity, prostitution, and the sexual freedom of two sexes), permanence and impermanence, pleasures of the flesh and spirituality, selfishness and ethic of service, faithfulness and faithlessness, the issue of social vices (drinking alcohol and consumption of drugs and gambling), the nature of good and evil, and the nature of a healthy society as foundations of new conceptions of significance of rule of law. In particular the whole social order needs to see how three conceptions of time (Chakrabarty's timeknot 2000) and the path of the prophets and the path of mankind can be reconciled and how the Heideggerian fourfold of gods, mortals, the sky, and the earth can be coordinated.

Without engagement at these deeper levels and production of tacit knowledge and philosophical and theoretical consensus, which are implicit in any assertion on any social issue including the issue of rule of law, the whole project of establishing a functional social order based on the rule of law seems to be doomed to fail in the Iranian context as it has failed frequently.

Consequently, the debate needs to abandon the obsession with the level of politics and law, and engage at the deeper and more fundamental level of

the market for truth for the society to be able to move from the state of lawlessness to the state of lawfulness. This requires a theory of social order and social phenomena, which can investigate how they are formed, deformed, reformed, and transformed in order to be able to understand how the transition from lawlessness to lawfulness can happen.

In terms of the experience of the historical actors in the constitutional era (and throughout Iranian modern history), the level of analysis has only moved from ‘cheap bread and meat’ issues to who should govern and how (good governance as manifested in the demand for house of justice), and the institutions of good governance (the constitution and the rule of law) as evident in the following piece, reported by Arjomand (1988: 38), from the constitutional era (in a rally in Tabriz in support of the constitutional movement):

> The people were asked: “What do you want, cheap bread and meat? Or do you have another objective?” The mass which was privy to no knowledge said yes, we want cheap bread and meat. It was suggested once more to them: “Do you want constitutional government (mashruteh)?”' This time they said yes three times in a loud voice.

Arjomand (1988: 37) further observes that:

> For the teleology of the Constitutional Revolution to unfold without hindrance, the Constitutionalists had to transcend not only the particularistic goals of the clerical estate and the mercantile class, but also the constant preoccupation of the masses with bread and meat.

Thus, the three Williamsonian levels of prices, governance, and institutions can be easily seen in Arjomand’s observation in the three categories of demands in the constitutional era: ‘the demand for cheap bread and meat (bread riots)’, ‘the demand for good governance’ as manifested in their protest against the governors of Tehran and Kerman and the subsequent demand for the house of justice (*edalatkhaneh*), and the ‘demand for the constitution’.

Alongside these three levels of analysis, the analysis of Iranian modern history is in desperate need of transcending obsession with them in the hope of entering the level of mind and its extension into the hyper-complex and largely unconscious level of regime of truth. This study covers a spectrum from truth to bread; truth is manifested in bread, and when we eat the bread, we consume the truth we managed to produce collectively to

support the stable socio-economic structures leading to the production of bread. Thus, truth and bread are social twins. Failure in the production of truth leads to the failure in the production of bread.

The Market for Truth

The analysis in this work, hence, locates the modern Iranian history in the political economy of supply and demand for truth or the war between rival regimes of truth to dominate the market for truth.[8] The notion of market for truth—the supply and demand for 'truth about' life, work, and language—and competition between rival regimes of truth are acknowledged in the following passages, as reported by Lambton (1964: 134), from Ayatollah Motahhari, one of the leading thinkers in the Ayatollah Khomeini's coalition, on the need for financial reforms in the religious institutions:

> The mardji' [marja, the source of emulation] would also become free and the mosques would no longer be markets in which the members of the religious classes displayed their wares for sale … As long as there is no central financial organization and the religious classes depend upon the support of individuals, it is inevitable that there should be rivalry among them to attract followers. In such circumstances the religious classes are forced to trim their sails to the desires and will of the masses…. if Islam and the religious institution do not offer a positive answer to the needs and desires of the people and satisfy their aspirations, they will turn to new ideologies and the very existence of Islam will be threatened.

Here we see the traces of mosques as markets and the threats the new ideologies pose for the niche held by Islam and the clergy in the Iranian market for truth. The encounter with a fully formed package of truth, modernity, changed the dynamics of Iranian market for truth irreversibly and created a unique and unprecedented problem for the Iranian *dasein*. This problem emerged in the form of the sudden availability of a seemingly easy option of conversion to the new regime of truth while the society did not have the chance to develop the capacity, the tacit consensus, and the stomach to digest the new way of life, its discursive and

[8] Following the pioneering works of Gary Becker, Witham (2010) applies the same logic to the notions of markets to other realms of life, for instance, in the analysis of market for gods; see also Benabou and Tirole (2016) on the notion of market for beliefs, and Iannaccone (2006) for the notion of market for martyrs.

non-discursive practices, its relations of power, and its techniques of subjectivity. Keddie (1962: 272–273, added emphasis) refers to this fact without exploring the full implications of it in creating the tragedy of confusion in the Iranian social order:

> The comparison also raises another question often asked by students of modern Asian religious thought. Why did not Asian religions develop a theologically consistent "Protestantism" in the modern period? … *many thinkers who were early concerned with religious reform, abandoned inward concern with religion as such, and passed over to more modern Western free thought. Also, the pressing nature of political problems, which involved questions of national survival or revival not faced so acutely by the sixteenth century West, turned the attention of thinkers from religion to politics, so that even apparently religious writings were often directed to political and nationalist goals.*

This rather lucid and insightful observation demonstrates that being thrown in the state of belatedness creates the sense of urgency and impatience ('now' imagination), which prevents the patient and painstaking step-by-step work of theorization and philosophization of new ways of seeing, thinking, feeling, and living to be developed and absorbed by wider population, and secondly the existence of the ready-made packages of truth apparently made the task of adopting and recreating modernity easy (see Masroori 2000; Abadian 2009a, b). In other words, the West was pioneer and had time to develop itself gradually and without much pressure from outside in a spirit of blind watchmaking and sleepwalking (see Nuovo 2011, for instance, for Locke's dilemma of inbetweenness but crucially without the traumas of belatedness; see also Gillespie 2008 on the theological origins of modernity), while the belated countries found themselves under immense pressure to achieve social transformation as quickly as possible; otherwise their mere survival was at stake and they would literally go extinct (as the American Indians and many other indigenous peoples experienced the brutal fate of almost total annihilation).

As such, the hyper-complex and bewildering demands of state of belated inbetweenness drive various social assemblages into a state of being a religious reformer one day and a free thinker the next, as Keddie (1962: 287; emphasis added) attests:

> Consideration of the personal opinions of Malkam, Ruhi, Kermani, and possibly Afghani indicates that **intellectual development in modern Iran was not marked by a gradual change over generations from old ideas to new**

> **ones**. Rather, more and more intellectuals have been exposed to Western ideas, and these ideas have tended to change their outlook radically from that of their traditional upbringing. As one elderly Iranian who himself experienced this change described it to me, the modern and scientific ideas of the West penetrated 'like a flash of light', overthrowing the earlier ideas held by him and his associates. Such a process can be documented in the writings of Kasravi, who began as a religious conservative and became an iconoclastic and anti-clerical nationalist.

Here we see the lack of mediating effects of "vanishing mediators" (Jameson 1988: 25) or "piecemeal tinkering" (Popper 1961: 61), which are crucial for the development of sense of ownership towards the new order, allowing the gradual emergence of novel forms of life through an evolutionary process of blind watchmaking and chaotic synchronization.

The vital role of incremental steps and vanishing mediators in achieving stable and irreversible changes can be mapped into the Persian literary and cultural notions of 'seven adventures of Rostam' (*haft khan-e Rostam*), 'seven cities of love' (*haft shahr-e eshgh*), and Attar's notion of 30 birds (*see morgh*) turning themselves into the mythical bird of wisdom, *Seemorgh*, by going through the several stages of agony and ecstasy in the voyage of discovery for *Seemorgh* (see Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, 2017, and Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*, 2017 on these notions). Going through several incremental stages of conception, gestation, birth, growth, and development allows a movement or an institution to grow from infancy to maturity. This corresponds to the principles of 'multiple realizability' and 'institutional diversity' as mentioned before (also see Taylor 2001, 2016).

The encounter with a fully developed package of truth in the state of belatedness in intersection with the state of inbetweenness resides at the roots of the impotence of all sides of the truth divide to supply enduring and relevant forms of new truth which could grasp people's imagination irreversibly and create a sense of ownership in the population at large.

In the market for truth, people reveal their preferences through supporting particular faces and voices via voting by feet and/or by hands. The demand side of any social movement (as a market for truth) is evident in the following excerpt from the leftist group the Fadaiyan Khalgh, the 'Minority'(*aghaliyat*) in a 1981 publication (Alaolmolki 1987: 225; see also Paidar 1995: 249):

> The power and potential of the revolutionaries lie in the fact that their movement is in accordance with mass interests. Their success is dependent upon mass mobilization. A revolutionary upheaval can only become a reality with the presence of the vast power and support of the masses. Therefore, the revolutionaries must adopt strategies for mobilising the masses.

Here we see clearly the characteristics of social agents as entrepreneurs of truths in the business of winning the allegiances of the people. Voices which fail to capture public imagination in a stable and sustainable manner drift into oblivion and have to exit the market for truth. Ayatollah Khomeini referred to the same dimension of the social movement, when he famously said to the crowd in his first speech after return to Iran from exile that "with your support I will appoint a government" (as opposed to the Shah-designated government of Bakhtiyar) (Coughlin 2009: 27).

The encounter with 'the real' of modernity has generated the state of belatedness in the non-pioneering countries and regions of the world, which in turn prompted the sense of discontent with the status quo and steered demand for change. The demand for change became a global phenomenon as manifested in reform and revolutionary movements in Russia, China, Mexico, and Portugal, amongst others, as attested by Kurzman (2008: 4–6; also see Sohrabi 2011; Keddie 1962). Modernity appears to have dwarfed and derailed almost all pre-modern social orders in an irreversible manner. As such what has been experienced globally by non-pioneering societies is the phenomenon of 'dwarfment' (Thomson 1880/2017: 78) rather than 'decline'.[9] The wave-like nature of modernity (Taylor 2001: 182) has submerged and engulfed almost all pre-modern orders in its floods. As Foucault (2003: 165) implies, "the only pathological fact is a comparative fact". The inevitable encounter with modernity has pathologized almost all aspects of pre-modern orders, in reaction to which some embarked on pathologizing modernity itself. As the encounter with modernity had disturbed and derailed the old equilibrium in the market for truth, the demand for change instigated a demand for truth about every aspect of life, work, and language. To catch up with the Western modernity in terms of techno-scientific progress and its assumed correlates, the belated countries needed to know about where and how and with what pace the transformation could be achieved, generating the

[9] This comes in sharp contrast with theories of decline, declinism, and theories of missing links and bottleneck, the analysis of which is beyond the space available in this work.

need for a theory of selection from other orders, in turn prompting the need for understanding the nature of social phenomena and their logic of formation and transformation with their ontological, epistemological, methodological, ethical, and aesthetical correlates.

This process in turn has required deep engagement with 'the truth about' gods, mortals, the sky, and the earth, which created sustained and uninterrupted waves of demand and supply for truth about life, work, and language. Foucault (1980: 93–94) refers to how the production of truth acts as the condition of possibility for the production of wealth:

> In the last analysis, we must produce truth as we must produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place.

Based on this formulation, the creation of stable and dynamic market for goods and services relies on the creation of stable and dynamic markets for truth.

The (in)famous call of Taqizadeh (one of the leading figures in the constitutional and post-constitutional era) for wholesale Westernization (becoming Europeanized from top to toe) (Ansari 2012: 62; Boroujerdi 2003: 22; Vahdat 2002) is the hallmark of the age where all realms of life, work, and language have undergone a crisis of legitimacy and identity and the demand for new truth has emerged. The politicization of anything and everything is another symptom or by-product of such a crisis in the production of truth. In the state of belated inbetweenness, life, work, and language are inevitably experienced as politics (see Bayat 2009). In his tract "the war of seventy two belief systems" (*Jang-e Haftad-o du Mellat*), resorting to the famous poem of Hafez, Mirza Agha Khan Kermani (1925: 102; see also Adamiyat 1978), one of the leading theorists and activists of the constitutional era who was killed almost 10 years before the start of the revolution, addresses the issue of 'truth' as one of the central issues of the age:

> Is there any truth or not and if there is, what is it and where is it and who has it and what is its signs and after knowing it how can it be pursued and how can it be achieved?

These are the deepest alive questions residing at the heart of almost all types of social movements and forms of background everydayness in the modern history of Iran, including the constitutional era, which demands from the researcher to conduct the analysis at the level of regime of truth

in association with the level of institutions, governance, and prices. Interestingly, in the above tract, Kermani explicitly and implicitly elaborates on how different people have different regimes of truth, without naming it as such, and even explores the fact that even people's taste, physical sensibilities, and emotional economies are scaffolded by their particular regime of truth. He offered a set of alternative truths, but ultimately falls into Hafez's trap of favouring the unity of all religions and what Berlin (1990) calls monism of truth (see Pedersen and Wright 2013; Weir 2012).[10]

It is worth noting that in the above piece of work, Kermani demonstrates the traces of appreciating difference in itself as the default position, while ultimately leaning towards taking modernity as the gold standard and trying to harmonize it with a version of 'true' Islam. Akhundzadeh, one of the leading theorists serving as an inspiration for the Constitutional Revolution goes much further, as Kia (1995: 440–441) reports, and expresses his materialist and atheist positions:

> Akhundzadeh contended that the universe constituted a 'uniform', 'harmonious', self-perpetuating, self-regulating 'cosmic machine', which worked according to rational laws and principles. In other words, the existence of the world was not dependent on the presence of a supreme being, an external force, or even a primary cause. The universe was made out of matter and functioned according to its own laws.

This position was not owned or actively promoted by many secular and liberal constitutionalists at the time and was repressed or disavowed or actively forgotten in order to maximize the support for the constitutionalist cause (as the state of belatedness turns all social actors into activists). These components were amongst the positions, which fuelled the liberal intelligentsia but never fully theorized, widely circulated, or even openly owned by them in the market for truth.

Iraj Mirza's poem, as reported in Ajodani (2002: 241), on the nonexistence of God where he poses a series of rhetorical questions and expresses his atheist conclusion in the form of "Where is God? Who is

[10] Here he reduces difference to the logic of the same following Hafez, saying that these 72 voices are there because they failed to see the truth and fell prey to the path of the myth; ironically Hafez fails to see myth and illusion (*afsaneh va afsoon*) as constitutive of truth (see Gabriel and Zizek 2009; Baudrillard 1998), as we briefly addressed in the methodological section of this work.

God? What is God? Stop debating aimlessly; there is no God (*Kou khoda? Kist khoda? Chist khoda? Bee jahat bahs makon nist khoda*)", demonstrates how the demand for and supply of reform of the old order—triggered by the dwarfment experienced in the state of belatedness—was inevitably translated into the deeper dimensions of search for truth directly relating to the Heideggerian fourfold of gods, mortals, the sky, and the earth. Almost a century later, Iraj Mirza's message was echoed in "Shamlu's unabashed call to "give up on heaven, for revelation comes from the earth" (Kamaly 2018: 177). We see the faint traces of Nietzsche's famous declaration of 'death of God' in Iran without the same evolutionary background. In the pioneer societies, catastrophic and sudden changes like revolutions (in thought or in social order) happen within a deeper gradual and evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization, while in the state of belatedness, the society faces a series of rootless small and large catastrophic changes imported 'from without' through Cartesian projects of reverse social engineering and intelligent design.

These developments, hence, led to the narrative/strategy of modernization, rule of law, and constitutionalism being associated with denotations and connotations of atheism, and antireligious orientations alongside the traces of support for free love and the spread of social vices (for example in the work of Akhundzadeh, see Adamiyat 1970), all of which as a whole would generate suspicion towards the new regime of truth. This free association between the doctrine of rule of law, atheism, materialism, and social vices, which demonstrates the co-evolutionary nature of social orders as meaningful complex systems, was at the root of the negativities generated and expressed towards modernity at the time.

The sharp difference between and within alternative voices and faces manifested themselves at all levels from rival ontologies to epistemologies, methodologies, ethics, aesthetics, and philosophies of life, work, and language with their associated affectivities and rituals.

Conclusion

This chapter embarks on exploring how the state of belated inbetweenness created tragedy of confusion in the Iranian lifeworld. The notions of confusion and tragedy were explored theoretically and empirically. It was further shown how the forces at work in generating tragedy of confusion are warring regimes of truth, functioning through various forms of intertextualities and intercontextualities. Furthermore, it was demonstrated how these

seemingly exterior forces manifested themselves in the phenomenon of multiple forms of interior selfhood. Inside is the fold of the outside. The theoretical and empirical constitution of selfhood and its associated worldhood and their relations to the notions of time and death, and the effects of their rival conceptions on the organization of life, work, and language were explored. This dynamics manifests the depth and width of the Iranian tragedy of confusion, covering the whole spectrum of Heideggerian spatio-temporal fourfold of mortals, immortals, the sky, and the earth. Considering this, it was suggested that the level of analysis of the socio-economic phenomena in Iran must involve delving into the level of market for truth. The nature and dynamics of the market for truth and how it contributes to the emergence of the tragedy of confusion was further investigated. Now the stage is set to explore the implications of tragedy of confusion in the formation of unstable coalitions in the story of the Iranian state of underdevelopment in the last 200 years.

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CHAPTER 5

Formation of Unstable Coalitions

Introduction

The encounter with modernity has shattered the Iranian house of being (a fragile house of being reconstructed in the Safavid era out of the materials and resources of Persianism, Shia Islam, and Greek philosophy) and Iranians have been ever since plagued with the state of discursive homelessness (for the significance of the notions of home and ideal homes in the midst of social transformation, see Chapman 1999, and also Molavi 2002: 54). The formation of coalitions has been driven by the urgent needs to form a set of collective wills and collective actions to construct a new house of being after the violent and disruptive arrival of modernity in the landscape of Iranian embeddedness (Sohrabi 2011; Foran 2005; Kurzman 2008).

The state of belatedness with its associated "now" consciousness calls for collective actions (Olson 1965; Medina 2007) to fill the development gap, which requires the formation of collective wills which itself requires the formation of stable coalitions to make institutional investments feasible and to start and finish tasks and projects of social change in areas such as birth control, vaccination, education, science and technology, health, security, diplomacy, gender relation, ethnicity, banking, inflation, employment, or economic growth. However, the state of inbetweenness with its associated tragedy of confusion and irreconcilable differences within and between various social assemblages (individuals and groups) would act as the condition of impossibility for the formation of stable

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coalitions. As such the composite state of belated inbetweenness leaves the Iranians incapable of fully and irreversibly committing themselves to the formulation and implementation of any project of social transformation. In a sense, the Iranians have frequently put into practice what Zizek (2008: xv) perceives as lack of full commitment in the realm of virtualized games on the internet:

> "if the thing doesn't work out, I can always leave!" If you reach an impasse, you can say: OK, I'm leaving the game, I'm stepping out! Let's start again with another game!

In a similar vein, the Iranians have stepped out of Taqizadeh's Constitutionalist version of the modernization game to start the Pahlavi's Persianization game, only to abandon that one as well to start Mosaddegh's independence-based constitutionalist modernization game, only again to leave it shortly and go back to the Pahlavi's Persianization game, only to once again leave it to start Khomeini-Shariati's Islamization game, once again on the verge of abandoning this and going back to another round of modernization or Persianization game through several strong and weak events of the Khatami's Reformist Movement, the Mousavi's Green Movement, the 2018 bread riots, and the like. The state of belated inbetweenness would generate 'the zone of occult instability' and would not allow the Iranians to stand the full course of formulation and implementation of almost any project of social engineering.

This lack of commitment is fully rational and is due to the sheer multiplicity of voices and their inhabited faces, which has made the emergence of stable consensus on any issue near impossible.[1] The Iranian voices and faces could not find and found adequate common grounds to be able to agree to disagree and achieve unity without uniformity. The horizontal and vertical movement in 'the real' (the power to affect and be affected between regimes of truth as things of this world) has created a multiplicity of forms of 'the symbolic' and 'the imaginary' wholes.

[1] The dynamics of relation between consensus and dissensus (Ranciere 2010) is a case of Deleuzian wider ontological processes of territorialization and de-territorialization; see also Arendt (1972: 70) on the notion of "tacit consent" and how "Dissent implies consent". See also Rawls (2005) on the notion of "overlapping consensus" and Taylor (2011) on the notion of "unforced consensus".

The Reciprocal but Incompatible Regimes of Truth

The enormous multiplicity of voices can be grasped when we note that in the Iranian state of belated inbetweenness, we have three regimes of truth, each having at least two major orthodox and non-orthodox branches (the Shia-Sunni divide in Islam, liberal-socialist divide in the modernity, and monarchy-poetry divide in Persianism). Inside each orthodox or non-orthodox divide, we encounter further instances of orthodox and non-orthodox divide like four schools of Sunni Islam or at least four versions of socialism/communism in revolutionary, religious, democratic, and nationalist forms of socialisms (an spectrum covering from Russian socialism to Chinese, to Albanian, and Cuban, let alone the European versions), or the deep divisions within the Persian poetry expanding over a vast cultural landscape from Khayyam to Rumi mediated by Ferdowsi, Hafez, and Sa'di, for example. Each one of these branches has their own white and black books, their own radical and pragmatic versions, and their own politics of piety and politics of ordinary.

The common ground and family resemblance, for instance, between the two large branches of modernity (socialism and liberalism) is the path-dependent pursuit of realization of techno-scientific heaven on earth, one through central planning and collectivism, and another through the trinity of liberal democracy, capitalism, and the human rights.

It should be noted that each regime of truth has roots in the other, like madness being the affirmative and negating condition of possibility for reason and vice versa. As Gale (2014: 12–13) observes,

> Socrates argues that our greatest blessings come to us by way of four forms of madness—prophetic, ritual, poetic and erotic—all of which he describes as having a divine origin.

In the Foucauldian language, as reported by Koopman (2010: 551),

> these terms are reciprocal but incompatible: they can neither be fully liberated from one another nor totally assimilated to one another… and at the very same time, these terms could never be fully detached from one another.

Accordingly, each regime of truth is the manifestation of madness for the other and embodiment of reason for itself. In a sense, the radical other (madness) forms the core of the self (reason), namely, everything is what it is not, as Sartre (1992: 112) would put it.

As such, Islam in its actualized form is Greek from top to toe; in its textual research methodology of jurisprudence, it is (largely) Aristotelian; in mysticism and philosophy, it is largely (but not exclusively) Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic, which ultimately in its evolution ends up into a form of Heraclitus-type process philosophy of "you cannot step into the same river twice" in Molla Sadra with his philosophy of trans-substantial motion (*al-harakat al-jawhariyyah*) (see Rizvi 2009; Soroush 2007; Nasr 1996b: 1148–1150). Thus, Islam can be considered as Greek and it is not: it incorporates the Greek but evolves in the riverbed of the religious texts and contexts, and in constant dialogue with mysticism, which changed it drastically into a non-orthodox form of philosophy, a form of anti-philosophy philosophy and a special kind of process spiritual philosophy involving perfectionist vertical and horizontal movements in intensity of being (Nasr 1996b: 1149–1150), which is again Greek of different type (Azadpur 2011; Nasr 1996a).

The dependence of *fiqh* or the Islamic jurisprudence on Greek logic in Shia Islam[2] is apparent in the chasm between *Usuli'yun* (Principalists) and *Akhbari'yun* (Literalists) (see Gleave 2000; Arjomand 1988). Literalists (and the proponents of School of Separation) allude to the contradictions and sense of irony in the use and development of the *fiqh* research methodology where Greek logic and philosophy are deployed to infer rulings from the Islamic sacred texts and contexts. This, for instance, was one of the constant lines of attacks by the first president of Iran Banisadr against the methodology of inference in *fiqh* (see Dabashi 1993). This is to the extent that in response to Ayatollah Javadi Amoli's (2011) assertion that Greek philosophers had preserved monotheism, Banisadr (2013) declares that "The clergy is the oldest Westernizers in the history of Iran; they have turned the Aristotelian logic into the tool of despotism for fourteen centuries." Ibrahim (2014: 50; see also Adamson 2016) addresses the influence of Aristotelian logic in the following terms:

> the influence of Aristotelian logic on Islamic thought was broad. Beginning with al-Ghazali (d. 1111) Aristotelian logic, in some form, was not only assimilated by *Kalam* (speculative theology in Islam), but even penetrated the "transmitted sciences," such as law (*fiqh*).

[2] For the corresponding case in the Sunni Islam, see Hallaq (1997).

According to Walbridge (2010: 115), Ibn Taymiya, the great fourteenth-century fundamentalist, commented acidly in his book *The Refutation of the Logicians* about this alien element in the midst of the Muslim scholarship:

> Those who wrote about the principles of jurisprudence after Abu Hamid [Ghazali] talked about definitions according to the method of the practitioners of Greek logic.

The Greek-dominated methodology of inference was deemed by some not to be at all suitable for the purpose of inference from the sacred texts and contexts. It was deemed heretical to borrow from outside the terrains of religion for the sake of inference of religious obligations, asking "Imam Plato" and "divine Aristotle" (Javadi Amoli 2010; Legenhausen 2007: 173; Nasr 1996a: 76) to help in the understanding of the Quran and Imam Ali's sayings. This is the contradiction pointed out by the literalist movement, which was eventually defeated by the leading clergy Vahid Behbehani's violent uprising against the literalists at the end of eighteenth century and was reformulated methodologically by Sheikh Ansari (see Armstrong 2000: 79; Dahlen 2003; Boozari 2011). The emergence of the School of Separation (*Maktab-e Tafkik*) in the Shia Islam is indicative of the perceived impurity at the heart of Islam and the Shia Islam (see Rizvi 2012, on *Maktab-e Tafkik*).

The emergence of modernity owes much to Islam (Al-Rodhan 2012; Lyons 2010; Rubenstein 2003; Gutas 1998, among others) largely but not exclusively due to its major role in acting as a bridge between the Greek legacy and the modern world, which makes Islam constitutive of modernity. Western modernity also defines itself in opposition to Christianity, which through associations brings Islam, the Abrahamic faiths, the Crusades, and the Middle East into the Western modern fold, imagination, and identity. The world experienced some of the denotations and connotations of the Crusades, for example, in the post-9/11 events and discourses. Persianism especially in the form of Persian poetry has deep roots in and inseparable affirmative or negating affiliations to the Islamic religious texts and to the Greek philosophy (Shayegan 2014; Dabashi 2012, 2013; Islami Nadoushan 2004; Dadbeh 1992, 2016a, b). The Persians contributed immensely in the development of Islam from a nascent faith to a mature civilization (Spuler 2014/1950; Hovannisian and Sabagh 1998; Motahhari 1970; Frye 1977/2000, 1963).

The Persians and the Greeks have been twins from the beginning of their historical and mythical time, each looming large in the imagination of the other and each constitutive of the identity of the other, to a lesser or larger degree, in negating or affirmative forms (for the mutual fascination between the Greeks and the Persians, see Crawford and Whitehead 1983: 183; Foltz 2016: chapter 2). As Foltz (2016: xi) attests:

> Iran—which Westerners called Persia until 1935-played a pivotal role in the early self-conceptualization of the West, projected as the essentialized "Other" by which ancient Greece defined itself.

The penetration of Greek philosophy in the Persian poetry was deep and wide. Rumi in his *Mathnavi* famously called love and its therapeutic power as "our *Aflatoon* (Plato) and *Jalinoos* (Galen)" (see Dadbeh 2016a, 2016b; Ruymbeke, 2009; Soroush 2003; Schimmel 1992: 121, for instance). Compared to other civilizational zones like China or Latin America, the West in its multiple forms of Greek philosophy and sciences, the Alexandrian Invasion of Iran, the Roman Empire, the Crusades, and the Western modernity have always loomed large in the Iranian imagination (see Dabashi 1993: 576, on how, for example, Banisadr incorporated these components in the definition of the West and also see Malkam Khan 1891, on the role of the Crusades and the Christian theology in the negative conception of the west in the Muslim and Iranian imaginations). As Holliday (2011: 155) maintains,

> relationship with an external 'other' is integral to Iranian national identity construction. Mostly this 'other' has been the 'West'.

Identities in all their forms and shapes owe as much to what they reject as to what they come to assert. The status of Persian poetry with its five monumental figures of Ferdowsi, Hafez, Sa'di, Khayyam, and Rumi as the non-orthodox form of Persianism is confirmed by Ali Ferdowsi (2008: 686 added emphasis[3]) when he maintains that:

> *In fact the true monarchs of Iran are its poets who have ruled the hearts of this nation*. Persian poets forever have set up their humble tents across from the lofty palaces of mighty and opulent kings, but destiny's decree has never

[3] See also Shayegan 2014; Dabashi 2012, 2013; Katouzian 2006; Islami Nadoushan 2004, 2007, 2011.

> been issued against their lordship, and the age of their sovereignty has continued down to our time without interruption. No turn of events, even the invasion of the Mongols, has managed to subvert their power.

We see the play of orthodoxy and non-orthodoxy (centre and periphery) between the "lofty palaces of mighty and opulent (Persian) kings" and the "humble tents" of "Persian poets". This leads to the emergence of what Ashouri (1990) calls "the empire of Persian poetry" and Shamlu (1997) dubs "poets as prophets". The Persian poets served as kings and prophets, paradoxically both enhancing and challenging the religion and the monarchy. The non-orthodox Persianism of Persian poetry immediately forms its own branches of orthodoxy and non-orthodoxy.[4] Each regime of truth immediately gives rise to its own Sunni and Shia forms. In terms of its relation with the regime of truth of Persian monarchy, three are three traditions of Persian poetry, according to Sadri (2011); some Persian poets deployed their business of production of poetic truth in the service of the kings and enjoyed king's generous patronages, others kept their distance and ardently preserved their independence, and still minority of others who cooperated with the kings productively but from the position of independence (also see Sharlet 2011; Scott Meisami 1987). Ansari (2012: 34, 56–57, 176–177) attests to the tensions and incongruences between orthodox and non-orthodox Persianism (in the case of how to approach and appropriate Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, particularly in the reign of the second Pahlavi).

Each branch and sub-branch of regimes of truth further divides in terms of its high and low cultures, the 'politics of piety' (Mahmood 2005) and the 'politics of ordinary' (Cavell 1988; Mulhall 1994; Dumm 1999) alongside its philosophical and ritualistic dimensions (each sub-branch having its own jurisprudence, mysticism, and philosophy or *Shariat*, *tarighat*, and *haghigat* corresponding to the organization of action (embodiment), emotion (heart), and thought (mind) (see Chittick 2000)). Each branch and sub-branch has its own bright and dark sides (white and black books[5]) and its radical and pragmatic divisions, depending on how it

[4] See Shayegan (Shayegan 2014: 21–22), for instance, on the sharp divisions between and within the pillars of the Persian poetry.

[5] On the white and black books of different regimes of truth, see Zarrinkoob (1957, 1969), Scaff (1989), Latour (1993), Avini (1997), Courtois et al. (1999), Young (2000), Sedgwick (2004), Shafa (2004), Mann (2005), Lincoln (2007), Martin (2011), Mignolo (2011), Alexander (2013), Ibn Warraq (1995, 2013), and Daryaee (2009), among others,

attempts to organize its relations with rival regimes of truth based on three principles of substitution, complementarity, and subsumption (whether the radical other needs to be subsumed, complemented, or substituted). Greer and Lewis (2005: xxvi), for instance, refer to the notion of "the good and the bad of the West" and provide a long list for each.

At a deeper and more fundamental level, modernity is deemed to be the Weberian 'iron cage' of humanity (Ritter 2015; Ritzer 2012; Taylor 2007, 1991; MacIntyre 2016, 1988; Nasr 2001a; Euben 1999)[6] or "the liberating force of human reason from all idols of enchantment and superstition", what Taylor (2007: 588) calls "the story of modernity as adulthood". The same bright and dark sides alongside their associated deeper philosophical dimensions apply to Islam and Persianism (which due to lack of space we do not address here). These multiple forms of regimes of truth operate inside the three projects of reverse social engineering and their internal subprojects. The proliferation of formal branches of these regimes of truth is further exacerbated by the dynamics of generation of unique and hybrid issue-based voices out of the multiplicity of forms of regimes of truth. The operation of addition and subtraction on three sets of regimes of truth and their internal divisions would generate multiplicity of hybrid voices.

This dynamics can be manifested in numerous examples, one of which is Shariati's voice. Shariati's voice (Saffari 2017; Mohammadi 2015; Adib-Moghaddam 2013; Rahnema 1998; Jafarian 2007), as a particular brand of political Islam, entailed Islam minus the clergy, which was added to modernity (especially revolutionary, post-colonialist, and socialist form of modernity) minus consumerism and capitalism, and Persianism minus monarchy. This is one example among many on how voices emerge out of the application of operations of addition and subtraction on three sets of regimes of truth. The voices have densely populated the three-dimensional space created by three axes of Islam, Persianism, and modernity. Each voice, depending on its position on the spectrum, may consider the voices on the left and the right of itself as too radical or too pragmatic as Shariati

where we encounter statements like "why Islam is the best", "why west is the best", or "why Iran is the best" affirming the white books of each regime of truth or statements like "why I am not a Muslim", "why I am not a modern", or "why I am not a Persian" referring to the black books of each side of the truth equation.

[6] Agamben (1998: 181) famously and controversially declared that "Today it is not the city but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West.". Bauman (1991) saw the Holocaust as a product of modern bureaucratic rationality.

regarded Hossein Nasr's voice as too pragmatic and an example of a form of Islamic ecstasy (Jafarian 2007), reminiscent of Marxism's depiction of religion as opium of the masses, and Nasr regarded Shariti's voice as madly radical (Jafarian 2007; Nasri 2007). This was despite the fact that Mojahedin Khalgh Organization sometimes considered Shariati as a pragmatist, lacking adequate revolutionary credentials and even suspected of being in collusion with the Shah's regime to arrest the revolutionary energy of the young.

In the state of belated inbetweenness, the social agents are engaged in the business of rhizomatic form of truth portfolio construction. Each voice is a truth portfolio constitutive of the elements from alternative regimes of truth and evolves as a coping strategy against the terrors of various forms of finitude in the Iranian context of inbetweenness and its hyper-complex interplay with the state of belatedness. Depending on the biographical and genealogical trajectories of different faces, they become hosts to these diverse voices. As each social assemblage is subjected to the different combination of the three regimes of truth, they attain their passive subjectivity and agency based on lexicographical ordering of different regimes of truth and their components.

Each face's selfhood, hence, is formed based on particular combination of general and local preference orderings. As such, due to his particular biographical and genealogical trajectory, the second Pahlavi (see Milani 2011), as a social assemblage, was subjectified in Persianism, modernity, and Islam, in that order, as his general preference ordering alongside a set of local preferences for food, music, art, cinema, and so on, which were selectively borrowed from all three regimes of truth. This formed the pyramidic and prismatic dimensions of his subjectivity and selfhood (see Tizro 2012 and Flynn 2005: 172, on pyramidic and prismatic nature of selfhood). Depending on their trajectories of social and individual experiences, different social assemblages at micro, meso, and macro levels float between these alternative packages of truth. Different context of situation primes and activates different components of this general or local preference ordering (for the notion of 'priming', see Burke et al. 2010: 155–156, 186). Social agents move between forces and voices in the search for a complete package of the three forms of (instrumental, communicative, and emancipative) rationalities. Different context of situation awakens different dimensions of Iranian selfhood. This constant movement between and within general and local preference orderings makes the formation of stable coalition almost impossible.

At the time of crisis, social assemblages revert to their general preference ordering and their pyramidic selfhood. At normal times, they take their general preference ordering as given and act within their local preference structure and prismatic selfhood. In contrast to the Shah, Ayatollah Khomeini's subjectivity, for example, was formed inside the regimes of truth of Islam with modernity and Persianism deployed as complementary elements. Inside this general preference ordering, he was invested with particular set of local preferences, which idiosyncratically combined various elements of all regimes of truth. For instance, he was reported to have developed a taste for the Western female fragrances or used to practise Persian poetry or admired the Persian movie *The Cow* (*Gav*). In the case of Mosaddegh, for example, his general preference ordering was based on giving precedence to modernity followed by Islam and Persianism as complementary components. His local preference ordering was once again a unique combination of the elements of the three regimes of truth, for example, in his tendency towards play-acting, outburst of weeping or appearing in pyjamas, or his stubbornness (see de Bellaigue 2012; Mirfetros 2011; Rahnema 2005).

Each social assemblage at a specific time is a particular and unique combination of the three forces, and their combinatory voices, and their associated general and local preferences. Depending on the change in context of situation, social assemblages move between different forces and voices, and either convert to a new general preference and affiliate themselves to a new regime of truth or change the elements of their local preference, and adopt and adapt different permutation or ordering of local preferences (preference reversals; see Elster 2015; Lichtenstein and Slovic 2006; Levi 1990). The asymmetric structure of preference is such that what is lacking from the truth menu gains bigger weights in the consumption basket. This can be explained by a series of cluster concepts known as "loss aversion", "endowment effect" and "contrast effect". As Tversky and Kahneman (2004: 902; see also Kahneman 2011) state:

> The basic intuition concerning loss aversion is that losses (outcomes below the reference state) loom larger than corresponding gains (outcomes above the reference state). Because a shift of reference can turn gains into losses and vice versa, it can give rise to reversals of preference.

Regarding endowment and contrast effects, Tversky and Griffin (2004: 917; see also Kahneman and Tversky 2000) maintain that:

> a salient hedonic event (positive or negative) influences later evaluations of well-being in two ways: through an endowment effect and a contrast effect. The endowment effect of an event represents its direct contribution to one's happiness or satisfaction. Good news and positive experiences enrich our lives and make us happier; bad news and hard time diminish our well-being. Events also exercise an indirect contrast effect on the evaluation of subsequent events. A positive experience makes us happy, but it also renders similar experiences less exciting. A negative experience makes us unhappy, but it also helps us appreciate subsequent experiences that are less bad. The hedonic impact of an event, we suggest, reflects a balance of its endowment and contrast effects.

Whatever dimension of Iranian identity which manages to capture the centre gradually loses its priority, intensity, and significance and the society gradually moves towards the marginalized dimensions of identity. This is due to the fact that the new project of social engineering with its demonization and/or marginalization of the alternative regimes of truth activates the loss-aversion, endowment, and contrast effects.

The endowment effect associated with the triumph of project of Islamization, for instance, is the fact that people can initially enjoy the manifestations (the signs and symbols) of their Islamic identity in the official media and in the Friday Prayers and other religious rituals, but the contrast effect captures the fact that these manifestations gradually become less exciting. Over time the magic of novelty fades. The loss-aversion effect captures the fact that people gradually start to miss the lost manifestations of Persianism and modernity in their daily lives. The same effects apply to the projects of Persianization and Modernization. In effect the Iranians are like a person trapped in a dysfunctional family, who wants to be with her mother, father, and grandparents, who themselves are trapped in a state of irreconcilable differences and mutual spitefulness. The endowment effect of being with the grandparents, for instance, is the enjoyment of being with them and experiencing common activities with them, and the contrast effect is that these activities gradually lose their original intensity and the loss-aversion effect constitutes the sense of loss and missing of being with the mother and the father. All of these effects drive her to embark on a cyclic rebalancing of her family-relation portfolio in her state of tri-polarity. Depending on her life trajectory and history, each Iranian person is at a different point from any other Iranian regarding her portfolio of love and hate for the three components of the state of tri-polarity and that is the root of irreconcilable differences, mutual mistrust, and coalitional strife between the Iranians.

Being in Exile

In effect, due to the process of subjectification, the default position of the Iranian preference structure is a state of tri-polarity, and the demonization and marginalization of one or more of these regimes of truth is deemed as a form of loss and mutilation by the Iranian *dasein*, and as such it triggers various forms of ebbs and flows in a multitude of games of cat and mouse towards reversing its loss by adhering to the marginalized regimes of truth even more enthusiastically. This is a process akin to being mutilated (Adorno 1974: 33) out of their human or social capital or cultural heritage or being sent into exile. This is exactly what the Iranian diaspora living in Los Angeles were observed to feel and act as Kelley and Friedlander (1993: 168) report from an Iranian psychologist interviewee:

> People here are trying to hold on to their cultural heritage, listening to Persian music, doing things that even my grandmother didn't do. In Iran, everyone was trying to become westernized, going to Europe, to America for education. And when they came back, they would speak English, and then, suddenly, now, they are becoming super-Iranians.

Mobasher (2012: 89) observes how Iranian immigrants in America refuse the project of Americanization:

> It seems that despite their impressive human capital, cultural familiarity, English proficiency, and potential for assimilation, Iranian immigrants spurn assimilation into the American way of life and embrace of its core values.

Mobasher (2012: 110; see also Hallaq 2013; Naraghi 2018) specifies what Americanization signifies for the exiled Iranians, which revolves largely around the deadlocks and predicaments of encounter with a permissive society:

> Americanization for most Iranian parents implies dating and sex, individualism, lack of respect for family and family members, and disregard for the family's welfare. … They perceive such behaviours as dating and premarital sex, especially for their girls, as not only disrespectful and inconsistent with Iranian cultural values and practices but also shameful for the family.

In effect, Persianism comes into conflict with both Islamization and modernization and prevents them from being assimilated into the Islamic republic or the American republic. This is along the fact that each person

has her own unique cocktail of the three regimes of truth with various doses of Islam, modernity, and Persianism. This causes the phenomenon of double marginality for the exiled Iranians (marginalization from the homeland and marginalization within the Persian exile community). Similarly, the Iranians living inside the country refuse to be totally assimilated into any project of reverse social engineering and feel and act exactly in the same loss-aversion way as those in exile outside the country.

As such, in reaction to the projects of Islamization, they become 'super Iranians' and 'super moderns', and in reaction to the projects of Persianization, they become 'super Islamists' and 'super moderns', and in reaction to the projects of modernization, they become 'super Islamists' and 'super Iranians'. This is what Dabashi (2010: 208–209) calls "over-Islamization" and "over-Iranization" (and we must add over-modernization to the list). The loss-aversion effect creates a defiant subjectivity.

If we ask why Iranians are in exile inside or outside the country, we are referred to a series of flashbacks starting from the turmoil of the Islamic Revolution, to the oppression of the Pahlavi dynasty, the failure of Mosaddegh's ONM, the gradual demise of the Constitutional Revolution, and the humiliating defeats and the associated economic and territorial concessions of the Russo-Iranian, and Anglo-Iranian wars in the Qajar Period. As such Iranian subjectivity and social reality is serialized through intertextualities and intercontextualities; the echoes of a history of humiliating treaties and the agony and the ecstasy of subsequent waves of uprisings, revolutions, and social movements into various forms of modernization, Persianization, and Islamization irreversibly haunt Iranian subjectivity (see Ghorashi 2003, for instance). This gives the experience of being an Iranian at micro, meso, and macro levels a sense of being part of a single form of seriality and *haecceity* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 261). The serialized relations between forces, voices, and faces in time and space create a virtualized plane where each experience ceases to exist as a single entity or substance, instead, catalyses various forms of social assemblages to the connective intensifications of movements, uprisings, and revolutions.

This process of creating waves of bittersweet social movements turns the Iranian body-social into a body without organs (without stable coalitions and differentiated institutions). Each incidence of drastic social change serves as an opening to the virtualization of pleasure, as desire for change through pains, triggering the making of body without organ and serializing the relation between subject-object configurations through a becoming-wave of intensities. Through these frequent rhizomes of experimentations,

the Iranian body-social and body-political de-territorializes itself from the incumbent projects, only to re-territorialize itself in a new project of social engineering. This is what Khomeini sees as divine madness and Reza Pahlavi (2010) as temporary madness, producing three regimes of madness (Gupta 2001). This is attested by Brumberg (1997: 42) in the following terms:

> By proposing methods of regaining a sense of spiritual "wholeness" that were both practical and cathartic, Khomeini captured the imaginations of millions of people.

In effect, the events and trends in modern Iran are a series of responses to the defeats of the Anglo-Persian and Russo-Iranian wars of the first half of the nineteenth century and the resulting humiliating treaties. The sense of inferiority and humiliation felt by the Iranians, for instance, in the hands of the Russians, the British (and later the Americans), reverberated throughout the Iranian modern history and erupted in the form of assassination of the Russian mission headed by Alexander Griboedov in Tehran in 1829 (Deutschmann 2015: 27) following the two Russo-Iranian wars of 1804–1813 and 1826–1828 with two subsequent humiliating annexation of territories and imposed treaties of Golestan and Turkamanchay, the two Anglo-Iranian wars of 1937–1938 and 1856–1857 and the resulting loss of Afghanistan and granting the British the capitulary rights of most favoured nation, and later being the victim of the Great Game in the Constitutional era, and following on into the forced abdication of Reza Shah, the ONM, and its subsequent anti-Mosaddegh coup of 1953 by the Anglo-American coalition and the resulting privileged presence of the American forces in the Shah's Iranian economy and society. This whole chain of events led to the 1979 revolution and the hostage crisis and the subsequent support of the West for Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war and the nuclear crisis and the Iran nuclear agreement of 2015 and its subsequent state of limbo dysfunctionality. From 1804 to 2015 (the time of nuclear agreement with the West and the rest) and 2018 (the time of its unilateral US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal), we can see clear continuity in the Iranian state of belated inbetweenness through the experience of defeats, capitulation, humiliation, or dysfunctionality, triggering the seminal question on "Iran's backwardness" (Matin-Asgari 2013: 15) or what Hoveida, the Shah's prime minister, calls the "abyss of backwardness" (Milani 2000: 197) and its associated series of strong and weak events rooted in the blame games and its associated affectivities of despair, dis-

may, and resentment. These series of experiences have triggered constant migration from one regime of truth to another in a perpetual search for liberation from the backwardness, entailing a range of phenomena from spiritual decadence to moral erosion, political ossification, cultural deterioration, or socio-economic underdevelopment.

Iranians as Diasporic, Homeless and Displaced

As a result, in the last 200 years, Iranians have almost always been 'diasporic' (*see* Gholami 2017, for the notion of 'being diasporic' as a mode of agency and praxis)[7] whether living inside the country or outside of it. They are permanently in exile, sometimes even layers of exile within exile. The displacement within the country happens when people or groups of them are treated as alien others and are excluded from full and free participation in various realms of life, work, and language. Becoming a political prisoner alongside being sent into exile within the country is the extreme manifestation of such a sense of displacement. Lack of sense of belonging and affiliation to the dominant project of social engineering is the ultimate sign of being in exile within or without the country. "The state of prison within prison" (*zendan dar zendan*), as described by Mohammadi Gorgani (2005, see also Jafarian 2007, Zibakalam 2008: 265–266 and 270–272) with regard to the multitude of bitter divisions within the political prisoners in the Shah period or becoming "a stranger in my own country" (Ghorashi 2003: 116) are the tell-tale signs of being in exile within exile inside the country.

The crucial difference between the two forms of exiles (internal and external exiles) is that external exile is blessed with the pre-existent set of institutional frameworks in the host countries—which allows Iranians to excel professionally via participating productively in the production of wealth in the host countries—while internal exile lacks such a stable institutional framework in the home country. But when it comes to establishing Iranian-specific groups, organizations, and activities, externally exiled Iranians show the same kind of mistrust and coalitional strife towards each

[7] This is more or less equivalent to what the Mexican philosopher Emilio Uranga (1921–1988) calls "Mexicans are creatures of melancholy," referring to a historical ontology of being groundless and without permanent foundation, leading to seeing the Mexican as an 'accidental' being, philosophically speaking (see Sanchez 2016).

other in the host country the way the internally exiled ones show it in the home country. Mostofi (2003: 690) reveals that:

> Iranians in America have not created a "harmonious end that binds them together." In fact, "it is a normal mode of behaviour for an Iranian to escape from other Iranians, or to ignore him wherever he meets one" (Ansari 1988: 26). According to Abdolmaboud Ansari (1988: 80), Iranians "suffer from mutual distrust and lack of social commitment. The immigrant's state of mind is one of skepticism and distrust." The lack of alumni and other associational activities among Iranians shows this lack of cohesiveness, which is necessary to the creation of a community.

One of Mobasher's interviewees (Mobasher 2012: 58) observes that:

> Iranians try to keep distance from other Iranians. They avoid speaking Persian in public stores, so they can hide their identity.

Another one of Mobasher's interviewees (Mobasher 2012: 80) attests that:

> Iranians are divided, distrustful, and alienated from one another. That is why they feel disinclined to unite, support each other, and work together collectively.

Khosravi (2018) observes that despite having the image of "good immigrants" Iranian diaspora in Sweden is plagued by fragmentations and conflicts along various lines. In the context of Farsi language classes in Denmark, Karrebaek and Ghandchi (2015: 82) notice that "there may be very large, perhaps irreconcilable, differences between" different narratives on Iran, disrupting Iranian people's attempts in forming a viable and stable collective classroom coalition and identity. The traces of these irreconcilable forms of differences and their associated emotional and affective economies are equally experienced in London, as Gholami (2015: 184) reports, where this time the devout Muslims feel the pains of being in exile from exile:

> many Iranians now feel that in order to be, or experience being, 'real' Iranians they must adopt or display a degree of non-Islamiosity, even if they are practising Muslims. On the other hand, devout Iranian Muslims who try

> to completely resist non-Islamiosity often face harsh antagonism and stigmatisation within 'the community'. These issues are a major source of social and religious transformation at the intra-diasporic level.

Mobasher (2012: 10) comes to the conclusion that:

> Rivalry and competition caused by different political and religious ideologies and factions have divided the Iranian community.

State-Society Divide and Finally Cutting the King's Head

Alongside creating irreconcilable divisions between Iranians within and outside Iran, this loss-aversion dynamics creates a recurring gap between state and society (Dabashi 2016a; Katouzian 2010; Abrahamian 2008) where if the state is Islamized, the society moves towards Persianization and modernization, and when the state is Persianized, the society moves towards Islamization and modernization, and when it is modernized, the society moves towards Islamization and Persianization. And within these movements, each social assemblage is different from any other in terms of the level, degree, and intensity of its attachment to and detachment from the three regimes of truth and their associated projects of reverse social engineering.

This is the outcome of the state of belated inbetweenness and not the cause of it. It is vitally important to note that the state of belated inbetweenness generates conflict within and between all organizations, groups, and individuals irrespective of their positions inside or outside of power. As such, the social assemblages (like Mojahedin or Fadaiyan Organizations or Shariati) who were fighting the Shah, for example, were as divided within and between themselves as the Shah himself alongside his coalition (like the conflict within the Shah himself, and within his circle between Hoveida and Alam, for example, Milani 2011: 282, or between the Shah circle and the queen circle, Naraghi 1994, or between Hoveida and Zahedi, Milani 2000: 247–248, or between the Shah and his American and Western allies, Zibakalam 2008). Even ordinary citizens, families, and organizations are as divided as the state itself. Akhavi (1998: 696) attests to this fact:

> The associations, guilds, lodges, societies, and syndicates have acted collectively in politically significant ways, but usually only in revolutionary periods.

Abdolkarim Soroush (Mohebi 2014: 72–73), a leading thinker in the Khatami's Reformist era, points to the division within the civil society in the following terms:

> when we find ourselves faced with a period of political openness, instead of becoming more united, we start attacking each other. It's as if we think that our mission is to prove our superiority over the others.

The following passage is the self-description of an ordinary citizen, an educated professional, reported by Molavi (2002: 45, 49), which is the perfect example of a society of selves, Hedayat's notion of *lakkategi*, and an explosive cocktail of various materials from alternative regimes of truth (what Iranians colloquially call *shotor-gav-palang* or camel-cow-tiger, a chimera, as the effect of bricolage and the act of improvisation):

> Mr. Ghassemi described himself succinctly, in short, declarative sentences: "I am a nationalist. I revere Mossadeq. I despise our clergy, but I have religious faith in a Sufi [mystical] way. Reza Shah, our greatest king, was right to attack our clergy. Ferdowsi is our greatest poet. He rescued our Iranian identity when the Arabs tried to swallow us." … "I admired Khomeini for his bravery in standing up to the Shah, but I didn't think the clergy should run our government."

This causes the individuals, as unstable coalitions, to join a collective coalition for a while and leave it soon afterwards. This dynamism is starkly manifest in the figure of Khomeini himself, as alluded by Brumberg (2001: 98, added emphasis), when, in late 1983, he stated publicly that he was not above making mistakes and admitted the time inconsistency of his positions and tried even to theorize it and make a virtue of the property of 'one man, many voices': **"I may have said something yesterday, changed it today, and will again change it tomorrow**". The same was true with the Shah who was, for instance, initially against the one-party system, ending up establishing one via his *Rastakhiz* party in 1975 (Milani 2011: 382).

As such the strife between state and society is just one example or symptom of a wider set of phenomena involving irreconcilable differences, distrust, and coalitional strife at all levels of social life. Consequently, being obsessed with the conflict between state and society refuses to cut the King's head, as Foucault demands, and diverts the attention from the wider and deeper phenomena at work.

The latest work obsessed with this conflict is Dabashi (2016b, see also Vahabi 2015, 2017). It attempts to decouple the state, as an oppressive and violent force, from the society, as a liberating and benevolent force. Although highly valuable as an exercise in theorization, the hyper significance attached to this binary and the way it is theorized seem to be counterproductive in the art and science of understanding and analysing Iran. In the state of belated inbetweenness, anything large or small may trigger a conflictual earthquake within and between selves, groups, circles, societies, organizations, and the society at large. Iran is a country of small and large earthquakes, both geologically and geopolitically. In Iran the society is as divided as the state (see Akhavi 1998: 696–698; Mohebi 2014). Social assemblages may fight incessantly over a wide variety of issues such as the value and interpretation of Hafez's or Forough Farrokhzad's poetry, the national calendar and its foundations, veiling and its limits, free love, social vices (gambling, drug, drink, pornography, etc.), the nature of relations with Western, Russian, Arab or Jewish states, nudity on the beaches, sexuality in arts, cinema and literature, the banking system and the notion of interest, the issue of linguistic purity and impurity between Farsi, Arabic and English (or other Western languages), independence of central bank, independence of universities, interpretation of major or minor historical events, faces, voices or forces, going to pilgrimage to sacred sites, the sacredness of revered people, texts or places, the issue of land distribution, the labour rights, child marriage and so on and so forth. Indeed, the notions of small and large, what issues are deemed as insignificant or significant, are themselves fiercely contested and in a state of perpetual fluidity. Due to the co-evolutionary and non-linear nature of social systems, major or minor disturbances in one field or institution can translate into major crises in other sub-systems (through the butterfly effect and the collapse of house of cards and domino effect) and for the whole social order (like banning movies for their implied sexual content or their profanities against the sacred, for example, may lead to disruption in investment in cinema, and in arts and through the prevalence of atmosphere of uncertainty and unpredictability to disruption in investment in the whole economic system and further leading to brain drain and capital flight; and as such a cultural crisis can turn into an economic crisis, which through lower productivity, quality of life, and welfare may lead to major crisis of legitimacy for the whole system).

In the state of belated inbetweenness, almost everything is politicized and turned into ideological turf wars due to the prevalence of 'now' imagination and its associated will to reverse social engineering rather than the will towards the emergence of evolutionary unforced societal consensus at unconscious and conscious levels (Taylor 2011). In a sense, the notions such as power and resistance deployed in Adib-Moghaddam (2013), among others, replicate the state-society binary opposition and the hyper significance attached to the realm of politics. Banakar (2016) deploys the state-society binary opposition and Katouzian's notion of short-term society to explain the driving culture in the Islamic Republic (for alternative way of challenging the state-society, ruler-ruled binary opposition, see Schayegh (2010: 50), Stanley and Jackson (2016), and Elias and Roberts (2016), among others).

The above-mentioned processes create a topological space where even voices and faces residing in close proximity cannot find adequate common grounds for forming stable coalitions. This is due to the fact that each social assemblage finds the idiosyncratic structure of forces and voices in other social assemblages as either too radical or too pragmatic, alongside the fact that selfhood as a coalition itself is highly volatile and unstable. This process creates a highly volatile set of unstable coalitions at individual, organizational, and societal levels. This volatile dynamics makes the landscape of Iranian social order filled with different brands of cultural tribes replacing more stable forms of old ethnic tribes. The Shah, Khomeini, Mosaddegh, and Taqizadeh are amongst the Iranian social order's cultural warlords engaging in waves of de-legitimizing wars of attrition against each other. Any social relation in art, science, economy, polity, or family is a field of possibilities and as such a battleground for alternative regimes of truth; these social terrains are fought over in waves of incessant turf wars by fleeting and floating cultural tribes scattered all over the social space.

Unstable Coalitions, Mistrust and Arrow's Impossibility Theorem

The transition from the state of socio-economic backwardness to the state of sustainable socio-economic development requires change in purpose, direction, and vocabulary of social diagnosis, alongside change in the institutional and governance structures and socio-economic policies,

which can be formulated in the framework of political parties or any other stable forms of coalitional alliances. The emergence and implementation of consistent constellation of collective actions required for achieving sustainable development in Iran is near or quasi impossible due to a process akin to Arrow's impossibility theorem (Arrow 1951/1963; List 2002; Gehrlein and Lepelley 2011). Morreau (2015: 239) observes that:

> Kenneth Arrow's 'impossibility' theorem tells us that under certain [reasonable] conditions there is no assimilating people's various preferences into a single collective ordering of their alternatives.

Given the long history of the theory of aggregation of preferences from Machiavelli's prince to Hobbes' leviathan and Arrow's theorem (Holler 2008), now let us imagine, for instance, that we have a number of people distributed over three choice bundles, differently ordered, for example, between God, family, and country demanding different set of loyalties and commitments (this example is taken from Sara Palin's statement when she decided not to run for the US presidency in 2012). When they come into conflict, the lexicographic orderings determine what is given precedence over what and what are sacrificed for what. These three elements can be ordered in six different ways (see List 2002: 72), which makes coming to stable consensus on a particular course of collective policies and actions impossible. We explain why.

At normal times, the different elements of the preference orderings can act as mutually reinforcing and complementary, leading to the emergence of prismatic self. But when the time of 'hard choices' (Levi 1990) arrives and different components come into conflict, for example, when the pursuit of God requires some sacrifice in terms of the interests of family or country, the selves turn into pyramidic structures dictated by the lexicographic nature of their general preference orderings. In this example, we have a set of two God-dominated preference orderings (God-family-country, God-country-family), which we call God-dominated set. We also have two distinct sets of family-dominated (family-God-country, family-country-God) and country-dominated (country-God-family, country-family-God) preference orderings. Furthermore, if at time 1 a particular preference ordering happens to reign at the collective level, the proponents of the other two preference orderings can form a coalition and overthrow it. As Gehrlein et al. (2014: 2346, see also Morreau 2016 for more technical details) maintain,

> In such a situation, no matter which candidate [alternative] is selected as a winner, there are a majority of voters who would prefer to have some other candidate to be selected as the winner.

The victors will also suffer from internal strife immediately after victory and the conflict has to be resolved by resort to some form of final arbitration (Arrow's dictator or Hobbes' leviathan, randomization, or common path-dependent norms). The proponents of particular set, after victory, will be plagued by internal strife as their orderings differ with regard to the second element of their ordering structure; if in opposition to God-dominated set, the family-dominated set becomes the final victor after eliminating the country-dominated set, they have to embark on internal fighting as they differ in terms of whether after family, God should be given precedence to country or the other way round.

The above case implicitly assumes that the individual voters have stable preference orderings and are not plagued by 'unresolved conflicts', 'preference reversals', and 'time inconsistencies' (Levi 1990, 2006; Loewenstein 2007; Free 2010; Elster 2015). But if we have fluid preference orderings where agent A at time 1 has God-dominated preference ordering and at time 2 has family-dominated preference ordering and at time 3 country-dominated ordering, the dynamics of coalition formation and collective actions would become even more complex. In this social order populated by agents with time-inconsistent preference orderings and preference reversals, the shift in orderings can happen within and between sets, creating our two important notions of 'difference within' and 'difference between' (see Jackson 2003: 45). In this state of belated inbetweenness, the unit of analysis cannot be individuals or other forms of social agents but preference orderings themselves, which are forms of social assemblages. For example, in our case, two notions of forces (regimes of truth) and voices (mixture of forces) define these preference orderings, and social agents are treated as faces who are dynamic and unstable carriers and hosts of the forces and voices. The individuals or groups do not possess well-defined, consistent, and stable preference structures. This fluidity of identity for social agents makes them move within a particular set from one preference ordering to another, or alternatively they may convert to entirely different sets. In the case of Iranian *dasein*, instead of God, country, family, we have Islam, Persianism, and modernity with their own internal divisions and subdivisions.

The constant changes in preference structures makes coalitions highly unstable and volatile and the formation of stable collective actions and institutions almost impossible. Preference reversals lead to coalitional reversals and institutional reversals. Considering the existence of so much irreconcilable differences and strife within and between social assemblages, we may legitimately ask how regime changes frequently happened in Iran then. How did Iranian people come together to overthrow one project of social engineering and replace it with another? The change in dominant regime of truth happens when these highly fluid preference structures unexpectedly, through the accumulation of discontent at a critical mass level, converge towards a common enemy and a vague shared alternative, as the description of Islamic Revolution by Foucault (in Afary and Anderson 2005: 95; see also Ghamari-Tabrizi 2008, 2016; Adib-Moghaddam 2013) as "a perfectly unified collective will" indicates. These instances of 'perfectly unified collective wills' occur based on the emergence of a broad-church coalition largely negatively and against common enemies (which are the incumbent cultural tribes), culminating in change in the incumbent regime of truth and its associated project of reverse social transformation. Soon after a short period of honeymoon, the 'unified collective will' starts to degenerate into multiplicity of warring wills, leading to the emergence of civil strife, which in turn motivates the emergence of the final arbiter as the coping strategy for conflict resolution against incessant and widespread levels of 'difference within' and 'difference between' plaguing the Iranian social landscape.

Westwood (1965: 124; see also Beeman 1976; Fatemi 1982, Mashayekhi 2006; Pirzadeh 2016) attests to this fact in the following two observations:

> Iranians have found it exceptionally difficult to trust one another or to work together over time in any significant numbers.

The notion of 'over time' refers to the time inconsistency of Iranian preference structure and 'significant numbers' to the floating and unstable nature of identities and alliances. Westwood (1965: 129, added emphasis) further adds that:

> Political parties have been nonexistent in any real sense. Party labels have proliferated from time to time, but most have been tiny and tenuous factions who saw advantage, for the moment, in the symbolism of numbers and

> unity. The Majlis [parliament] has been a collection of individuals and tiny factions, none dependent upon party for their seats, *without stable majority coalition. Men have coalesced on particular issues, usually against the government, have been prepared to leave this coalition on the next issues and have expected others to do so.*

Based on this remarkably precise observation, coalitions are issue-based and highly unstable and volatile (see Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani 2018; Hunter 2014; Moslem 2002, for the remarkably similar observations in the Islamic Republic era). The incidences of 'difference between' occur due to the antagonistic and binary logic of good against evil prevailing between affiliates of alternative regimes of truth, where Islamists, Persianists, and modernists label each other as infidels, xenophiles, or superstitious, among others. The incidence of 'difference within' occurs due to lack of consensus on different positions within the affiliates of any regime of truth. The sudden, traumatic, and disorientating encounter with modernity has thrown the Iranian subjects into the state of belatedness, not bestowing them adequate time and space to form new stable and largely tacit and unconscious consensus on different positions related to life, work, and language.

As such in the camp of Shia Islam, for instance, we encounter sharp and sometimes violent differences on ontological, epistemological, methodological, ethical, and jurisprudential positions alongside differences in political philosophy, history, economics, and aesthetics. The voices inside the set of regime of truth of Shia Islam differ antagonistically with regard to ontological positions, for example, whether the universe has been eternal or emergent phenomenon, or whether the next-worldly resurrection is only in soul or has bodily manifestation as well, or in the relation between God and creation on whether it is a case of unity in multiplicity or in total dissimilarity. Furthermore, there are violent differences between different approaches in Shia jurisprudence and between intellectual and clerical versions of Islam on how to interpret seminal events in the history of Islam and on how to harmonize reason and science with revelation while keeping superstition out (Mir-Hosseini 1999; Malkam Khan 1891; Khalaji 2011; Tizro 2012; Leaman 2014; Ayatollahi Tabaar 2018).

Inside the *fiqh* community, there are violent differences between those who advocate the literal truth of almost all Islamic rulings—for example, on adultery, theft, capital punishment, abortion, inheritance, murder,

veiling, usury, or apostasy—and their immutability and the obligation for their universal application in all times and places. There are irreconcilable differences on whether Shia rulings can be the subject of the principle of 'secondary rulings' (*Ahkaam-e sanaveeyeh*) and be suspended temporarily for the pursuit of bigger common good of the community, and on the issue of which category of rulings can or cannot be subject to such suspension. Furthermore, there are significant differences between intellectual and clerical versions of Shia Islam on whether some *Quranic* rulings (e.g. on retribution or *ghesas* and capital punishment) can be abolished altogether or abrogated permanently as examples for the Quranic topic of 'the abrogating and the abrogated or *nasikh va mansukh*' (Wild 2006: 3–6).

Hence, the confusion and incessant differences on, for example, what constitutes usury and how to abolish it from the economic system and how to harmonize the Islamic economic system with the wider international economic system create widespread and debilitating levels of dysfunctionalities, reversals, and abortions in the banking and economic system (see Clawson and Floor 1988; Ahmadi Amoui 2006; Maloney 2015; Gohardani 2017). The issue of abolishing usury (*riba*) achieves high level of urgency and significance for Muslims as the Quran banned it explicitly and resembled it to 'dwelling in hellfire' and 'declaring war on God and the Prophet Mohammad' and the hadith (sayings from the infallibles of Shia Islam) likens 'engaging in usury to be worse than sleeping with one's own mother 70 times in the house of God (*Kaba*)' (see Makarem Shirazi 2010; Khan 2010; Askari et al. 2010; Mirakhor and Askari 2017, among others). The shock value of these statements should not be underestimated (for the most recent rants about the prevalence of *riba* in the Iranian economic system, see Abbasi 2016, and Javadi Amoli 2016, among others). The decentralized nature of the clergy and the Shia community (Mir-Hosseini 1999; Tizro 2012; Rahnema 2005; Yousefi 2017; Ayatollahi Tabaar 2018) makes the task of reaching agreement on any issue almost impossible. Every possible solution is disputed by some rebellious voices, which can act as cultural tribes and may soon be able to take over the centre.

The trouble becomes even more exponentially devastating when we see that there is no consensual method, path, or roadmap to resolve differences, or to 'agree to disagree' (see List 2002, for two concepts of agreement, Gehrlein and Lepelley 2011, for the relevant notion of

single-peakedness, and Gehrlein et al. 2014, for the notion of meta-preference) at the level of meta-preference or achieve 'unity without uniformity' (Zibakalam 2008), as the differences extend to the methods of conflict resolution themselves as well. There is no consensus on whether the irreconcilable differences on small and big issues of life, work, and language should be resolved democratically, by resort to the experts in religion or science, or by resort to the experts in communal wisdom like poets or even the wisdom of the kings. Islamic, Persianist, and modernist textbooks come into bitter truth wars with each other (see Ahmadi Amoui 2006: 180–181, on the strife between the economic vision of Roghani Zanjani and Nili on the side of the modern economic textbooks and the war-time prime minister Mousavi on the side of the Persianist and Islamic textbooks over the organization of Iranian economy in the Iran-Iraq war period). The same sets of conflicts were fiercely mounting on multiple fronts in the Pahlavi period between the Persian poetry and the modern rational thinking, and the Islamic rationality (Afkhami 2009: 55, 398, 443–445; Ridgeon 2006, for instance).

The conflicts between and within experts or technocrats, politicians, intellectuals, Persian literati, and the clergy were rampant throughout the Iranian modern history. The daily clashes, the state of cold war, and dysfunctionality within and between these groups surged frequently into the surface, for instance, in the case of internal violent conflict within the Mojahedin Organization in the Shah period; in the case of President Ahmadinejad abolishing the Organization for Budget and Planning; in the cases of the debilitating rifts over economic policies within the cabinet members and between them and the experts and non-experts in the civil society in the governments of Rouhani, Khatami, Rafsanjani, Mousavi, and Bazargan; and in the Pahlavi period (see Gohardani 2017; Amuzegar 2014; Sadr 2013; Nasr 2000; Afkhami 2009; Ahmadi Amoui 2006). The coalitional relations with experts in Iran (especially in social sciences and humanities), like almost all relations, is a love/hate relation fraught with dysfunctionalities and deformities. One minute they are desperately needed and valued, and the next they are cursed and disregarded. Afkhami (2009: 210) reports how the Shah, for instance, had come to believe that "the best economists are those who never studied economics". As such the emergence of consensus on the level of "meta-preference" (Gehrlein et al. 2014; Sen 1982) is blocked and the dynamics of coalition formation converges towards issue-based, transitory, and fleeting forms of coalition formations, as attested by Westwood (1965: 129).

Belated Inbetweenness, Multiculturalism, Postmodernism

The existence of irreconcilable differences on methods of conflict resolution is the defining feature differentiating the Iranian state of belated inbetweenness from the experience of multiculturalism in the developed societies. In the developed societies, there is a historical (largely tacit and unconscious) consensus on liberally democratic methods of conflict resolution enshrined in written or unwritten constitutions alongside a stable set of arrangements institutionalizing the historically formed consensus. In addition, in the advanced societies, there is a stable common ground upon which the fluidity of postmodernity and multiculturalism can be introduced, leading to the incremental and piecemeal changes in the sedimented embeddedness of these societies. This is incomparable to the state of belated inbetweenness, where there is no stable common ground and no shared stable embeddedness and no way to agree to disagree or achieve unity without uniformity and there is no stable institutional background. As such importation of concepts, methods, or solutions from the advanced societies (like the independence of the central bank or inflation targeting or liberalization and deregulation, or limited state) seems to be totally counterproductive for the countries immersed in the state of belated inbetweenness.

The fluidity of Bauman's (2000) 'liquid modernity' or Lyotard's (1984) 'postmodern condition' (Lyotard acknowledges that his analysis only applies to the developed societies) is entirely incommensurable with the fluidity of Bhabha's (1994) state of hybridity and inbetweenness (especially when combined with the state of belatedness) or Fanon's 'zone of occult instability'. As McRobbie (2005: 99, original emphases) reminds us, "**Hybridity** and the **third space**, the **time-lag**, the **in-between** and the **beyond** are the key to his [Bhabha's] writing", and to the troubled societies.

Fluidity of identity and its fragmentation in the state of belated inbetweenness is drastically different from (seemingly) similar phenomenon in the state of multiculturalism or liquid modernity in advanced societies with synchronized and harmonized embeddedness and its associated institutional stability (stable and functional parliaments, firms, banks, schools, hospitals, courts, police, etc.). Nomadic behaviour in a stable institutionalized background is playful and enriching while nomadic behaviour in a liquid embeddedness creates psychosis, disintegration, and collapse.

Hybridity in such a context breeds discontent (Brah and Coombes 2000). That is why Shayegan's (2001)—or Adib-Moghaddam's (2013)[8]—universalization of the phenomenon of fragmented postmodern identity, for example, in the book *Modern Enchantment: 40-Piece Identity and Fluid Thinking*, is a less than satisfactory analysis of the singularity of the Iranian situation of belated inbetweenness. As Ross (2010) reminds us, stable institutional structures bestow stability to the self, as selves act as coherent and predictable entities (as ants or happy slaves) in the contexts of situation where institutions are stable. The stable societies produce bee-like happy slaves,[9] willing obedience, and herd behaviours, while the troubled societies immersed in the zone of occult instability produce unhappy slaves fraught with resentments and disturbed behaviours.[10]

The state of belated inbetweenness can be further contrasted with a range of other theoretical constructs as well. Fukuyama's (1992) narrative of the end of ideology and Huntington's (1996) narrative of the clash of civilization bring the clash between stable selves and identities to the fore. Civilizational analysis (Arjomand and Tiryakian 2004; Arjomand 2017; Saffari 2017)[11] implicitly or explicitly assumes a coherent and stable civilizational identity for the social actors, which hardly exists in the state of belated inbetweenness with its associated forms of 'shifting identities', 'identitylessness', and 'fluid hybridity' without any stable institutional framework. The postmodern "metanarrative about the failure of *all* metanarratives". (Carroll 1997: 94, original emphasis) or "cosmopolitan culture" (Dabashi 2010: 173) equally does not apply to the Iranian context

[8] In a statement such as this: "The transnational and multicultural realities of the history of Iran are indicative of a post-modern condition that continuously escapes any form of ideational fascism" (ibid: 125). As we mentioned before, all forms of hybridity cannot be subsumed under the category of postmodernity; rather some of them arise due to the state of confusion associated with the state of belated inbetweenness with its associated institutional instability.

[9] Rousseau (1976: 143) exclaimed, "You peoples of the modern world, you have no slaves, but you are slaves yourselves." And Fromm (1994) maintained that most people will try to "escape from freedom".

[10] For the notion of 'happy slave', see Herzog (1989); see also Milgram (1974/2005) and the related literature on the logic of obedience. For the notion of 'willing obedience', see Asad (1987: 165), and for 'herd behaviour', see Thaler and Sunstein (2008), among others.

[11] Tiryakian (2004: 43) advocates the civilizational analysis of the twenty-first century, which involves taking civilization "as a proper macro sociocultural unit of analysis, more encompassing than the nation-state but less sweeping than a 'world system'".

of belated inbetweenness. Rawls' call to appeal only to a shared family of political conceptions of justice could not work in the Iranian state of belated inbetweenness, as hardly any such set of shared frameworks exist. Even the notion of overlapping consensus (Rawls 2005; see Badamchi 2017 for one example of application of Rawls' version of political liberalism to the Iranian context) is of little help due to its disregard for the Berlin's and Kuhn's notions of incommensurability and how they interact with principles of embeddedness and emergence. The disembedded nature of these forms of out-of-shelf theory adoptions manifests itself in their failure in the hermeneutics of alterity (see Godrej 2017), for instance, to engage faithfully and productively with the political Islam and the theory of jurist guardianship (*velayat-e faqih*) as a contextualized challenge to the liberalism's hegemony and not through treating it as an aberration and as a fundamentalist form of monstrosity and bastardity.

As such, the notions (and debates surrounding them) such as multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, liquid modernity, and postmodernity and their associated packaged and cluster concepts such as liberal democracy, open society, critical realism, end of ideology, clash of civilizations, secularism, post-secularism, post-Islamism, fundamentalism, non-Islamoisity, theocracy, despotism, Mafia, totalitarianism, fascism, Nazism, populism, patrimonialism, sultanism, and the like, which are widely and frequently used to make sense of the Iranian human condition, are largely misplaced and may constitute cases of 'epistemic violence' (Spivak 1988: 280), 'knowledge subjugation' (Foucault 1997: 7), 'epistemological imperialism' (Ackerly and Bajpai 2017: 286), and counter-transference, misdiagnosing and mis-categorizing the singularity of Iranian state of belated inbetweenness. As Dabashi (2010: 215) puts it, we need to get away from the tired binary oppositions due to the fact that, as Hunter (2014: 13) attests, they are not "adequate for understanding the diverse and complex forces that are animating Iranian society and polity".

Unfortunately, Dabashi, Hunter, and Rezagholi alongside many others frequently fall into the trap of different types of exhausted and counterproductive binaries like democracy/dictatorship, democracy/theocracy, repression/liberation, violence/non-violence, truth/delusion, and agency/structure, among others. The widespread deployment of prefix 'post' as in post-Islamism, post-secularism, and the like to indicate the passing of an age and the coming of a new age will not help as well, as it indicates a sense of irreversibility and decidability, which does not exist in the state of belated inbetweenness, and we are frequently faced with all

forms of reversibilities, 'the return of the repressed' and 'the zombies'. In the state of belated inbetweenness with its associated tragedy of confusion, almost none of these conventional categories of thought apply. We need the science of singularity involving the dictum 'categorize as you go' as Deleuze and Guattari (1994) maintain.

By exploring the logic of collective action and the calculus of group and coalition formation (Demange and Wooders 2005; Poulson 2006; Fadaee 2012), this study demonstrates that the confusion between alternative identity markers and packages of truth produces agents with time-inconsistent and context-specific preference and choice structures (agents who listens to the voice of short-term self one minute and medium-term self the next, and the long-term self at the third; an agent-in-crisis in the zone of occult instability). This phenomenon creates short-lived alliances and unstable coalitions, which allows us to make sense of the stylized fact of Iran being known as the country of short-lived alliances (Nategh 1983; Abrahamian 1989; Azadi 2011; Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani 2018). Lambton (1954: 16) attests to this phenomenon in the following terms: "factional strife, in one form or another, has been a marked feature of Persian life" (see also Abrahamian 1974: 17; Maloney 2015: 13; Brew 2017: 3). Abrahamian (1978: 22) reports one stark observation in this regard:

> a British consul, frustrated in his attempt to form an anti-communist front in his region, complained to the Foreign Office: 'No two Persians can ever work together for any length of time, even if it is jointly to extract money from a third party'.

Almost every Iranian person or face is an example of the process of formation of short-term alliances at micro level. Frequent migration to alternative discursive lands leads to Iran being known as a country of unstable coalitions. This is not restricted only to the realm of polity but is endemic to all realms of life, work, and language (like the incessant turf war at all levels over language and language policy; see Katouzian Katouzian 2004: 35; Kia 1998; Azarnoosh 2006; Borjian 2013). The phenomenon of instability of coalitions is not restricted to particular ideological or doctrinal affiliations and plagues all ideological orientations and persuasions from the left to the right, and from the religious to the secular (if such categorization is ever applicable to the people immersed in the state of inbetweenness) and emanates from the exposure to the state of belated inbetweenness and warring regimes of truth.

Examples of Unstable Coalitions

In this section we provide examples of unstable coalition from the Constitutional era, the ONM era, and the Islamic Republic era.

Unstable Coalitions in the Constitutional Era

In the constitutional era, all players formed fleeting coalitions with each other and with foreigners, as in the example of fleeting coalitions of the constitutionalists with the British or Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri with the Russians. Based on the three groups of producers of truth and their internal division between the radical and pragmatic divisions, we see seven major coalitions in the constitutional era: the Shah coalition (radical and pragmatic Persianism), the Nuri coalition (radical Islamism), the Taqizadeh coalition (radical constitutionalism), the Malkam Khan coalition (pragmatic constitutionalism), the Behbehani-Tabatabai coalition (pragmatic Islamic constitutionalism), the Afghani coalition (pan-Islamism), and the British-Russian coalition. We cannot delve into the details of how these coalitions evolved here due to the word limits. Here we only explore some of the patterns in the Taqizadeh coalition.

The Taqizadeh Coalition

Taqizadeh's coalition, representing radical constitutionalism, produced the main ideological blueprint of the Constitutional Revolution. They were the true believers in the modernity and its magical power of progress, science, liberal democracy, rule of law, social justice and land reform, equality before the law, gender equality, the establishment of institutions of modern nation-state, and social freedom, among others. As such their overriding regime of truth was orthodox modernity (liberal democracy) combined with selective elements of non-orthodox modernity (socialism). They were radical modernizers and the affirmative dimension of their project of social engineering revolved around the institutionalization of modernity (modernization) complemented by selected elements of Persianism and Islam to fill the lacks in the modernity where and when they were required through intelligent design and reverse social engineering. The whole project was captured in the master signifier of constitutionalism. The negating facet of the Taqizadeh coalition's project of social engineering targeted the oriental despotism, the religious despotism, and

the occidental despotism, in that order, as the main obstacles towards institutionalization of modernity in the country.

The Taqizadeh coalition formed alliances with the religious constitutionalists and even the religious non-constitutionalists against the common enemy, the oriental despotism (the Persian monarchy). The alliance with the non-constitutionalist faction (the Nuri coalition) disintegrated quickly after the establishment of the first *Majlis* in dispute over the secular or religious nature of the constitution and its principles of equality before law and freedom of speech (Afary 2005), which led to the coup against the constitutional order. After the restoration of the constitutional order and in the second *Majlis*, the alliance with the religious constitutionalist coalition (the Behbehani-Tabatabai coalition) collapsed following the assassination of Behbehani, which was perceived to have been committed by one of the members of the Taqizadeh coalition (Ajodani 2003: 115, 119–120).

The strife within the Taqizadeh coalition became even more pronounced when the episodes of verbal and physical extremism prompted influential faces like Ali Akbar Dehkhoda and Mohammad Khiabani to voice their dissatisfaction (see Ajodani 2003: 129) and ultimately to leave the radical modernist coalition and join the moderate constitutionalist side. The radical modernists were plagued by divisions and conflicts within their ranks. Lambton (Ra'in 1976: 180) reports about the existence of factional strife within the Secret Society (one of the influential societies founded by the radical modernizers), leading to the emergence of Second Secret Society (on political parties, societies, and associations and the divisions between and within them, see Shahibzadeh 2015; Sohrabi 2011: 311–312; Ettehadieh 2011; Kharabi 2007; Abadian 2006; Afary 1996; Kasravi 1994; Bayat 1991; Bahar 1944/2001). The fact is that there were marked differences between members of the Taqizadeh coalition (see, e.g. Ajodani 2003: 430) almost on any issue, for instance, on land distribution, gender relation, the use of violence against opponents, the use of verbal insult against the rivals, whether Islam needed to be deployed in the service of constitutionalism or be attacked, and if so, which aspects of it, which elements of Persianism needed to be valorized, and which marginalized, among others. These instances of shades of grey had frequently created factional strife within the Taqizadeh coalition and made it highly volatile and unstable. This is attested by Ajodani (2003: 437–438): "In the secular intellectual fronts, deep chasm emerged too".

The boom and bust in the truth cycle and bitter break in the coalition of Taqizadeh with the Iranian people is evident in the following observation from Katouzian (2012: 203, added emphasis) where Taqizadeh moves from being a genuine devotee of the Iranian people to expressing deep contempt for them:

> Taqizadeh, who during the constitutional revolution often signed his name as fada'iye mellat (devotee of the people), had become thoroughly disillusioned with his compatriots, such that he had written to a friend: "*Most, in fact virtually all, Iranians are spineless, two—faced, sycophantic, liars, who play up to authority, hide their views … and each day, depending on their position, subscribe to the idea which happens to be in vogue … And they are constantly busy making plots and intrigues*".

Taqizadeh's observation on the chameleon-like features of the Iranians is repeated by almost all observers in the modern history of Iran and was frequently used to demonize people, while in the beginning of the movement, they used to treat people as angelic victims of the demonic forces inside or outside the country. Ironically, Taqizadeh with a U-turn in his positions on the oriental despotism and on the project of wholesale Westernization was himself one member of this chameleon-type nation.

As he saw people of Iran as spineless, many saw him as equally spineless. This was to the extent that in the course of 14th *Majlis*, Mosaddegh, once Taqizadeh's close friend (Majd 2001: 205), said that "Mother nature has not given birth to any traitor like Taqizadeh" (Sahabi 2007: 244). Taqizadeh's life was a turbulent adventure exemplified in the move from the pragmatic radicalism of the Constitutional era to the radical pragmatism of the post-constitutional era (in joining the Reza Shah's team). This volatile journey of a lifetime immersed him in the controversies of the revolutionary reign of terror in the Constitutional era and in the scandalous signing of the 1933 oil treaty with the British. As such he moved from one extreme of radicalism in the controversy of assassinations of Amin-al Soltan and Behbehani to another extreme of pragmatism in signing the oil treaty under Reza Shah.

Unstable Coalitions in the ONM Era

In this period, we have five names as signifiers of various voices: the Shah (a pragmatic and then a radical Persianist), Mosaddegh (a radical constitutionalist), Ayatollah Kashani (a pragmatic religious constitutionalist),

Navvab Safavi (a radical Islamist clergy), and Ayatollah Boroujerdi (a grand Ayatollah and a traditional leader of the Shia community). Almost all of these figures had to lead a coalition while attempting to be a national figure of unity over and above all forms of factionalism; the state of belated inbetweenness frequently creates such a paradoxical situation. We also encounter a communist organization, namely, the Tudeh Party with its ideological alliance with the Soviet Union, and an external coalition of Anglo-American alliance, which with their associate faces, groups, societies, and countries shaped the destiny of Iranian in this era.

Here we have complex sets of forces, voices, and faces interacting at a bewildering pace, engaged in taking positions, forming coalitions, changing positions and forming new coalitions, and changing sides, colours, and voices at an incredible speed, resembling something like 'speed dating'. Ayatollah Kashani dates Mosaddegh and the Tudeh Party and even the Anglophiles like Sayyed Zia and then changes side and dates the royal court (Sahabi 2007; Rahnema 2005). Mosaddegh has allies like Kashani who connects him to the Islamic circles of different shades of colour and at the same time is in close alliance with people like radical nationalist modernists like Hasan Fatami who has close friendship with the Tudeh Party (Sahabi 2007). The same is true with Ayatollah Boroujerdi who through Ayatollah Falsafi and Behbehani was connected to the Shah's circle and ends up sending a telegram to the Shah for his return to the country after the success of the 1953 coup (Movahhed 2004: 154; Sahabi 2007: 161; Jafarian 2007: 197). All faces from Navvab Safavi and Kashani to Haerizadeh and Makki (nationalist modernists) to the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party and Sayed Zia (an anglophile) participated (see Rahnema 2005: 126 on Sayyed Zia-Tudeh-Kashani-Mosaddegh coalition) in the anti-Hazhir coalition (and in the anti-despotism coalition of the journalists).

General Zahedi was the reincarnation of General Razmara, another figure from the army, who had significant impact on the course of events in this era. While early on in the Mosaddegh camp, he later on became the focal point of anti-Mosaddegh campaign. He managed to activate the discourse of the threat of regime change and the dangers of communism to coalesce all anti-Mosaddegh forces around himself (Rahnema 2005: 695). Kashani, formerly in the camps of anti-oriental and anti-occidental forms of despotism, joined his former enemies, pro-monarchy clerics like Behbahani and Falsafi, through some middlemen (Rahnema 2005: 755) to finally overthrow Mosaddegh's government. Kashani changed sides both due to the growing power of the Tudeh Party (and the looming

spectre of communism, which prompted a shift in his priorities in a butterfly effect) and due to his perception of Mosaddegh increasingly turning into an authoritarian figure (Abrahamian 1982: 274).

The line of argument in this section is deceptively simple. In this era, a set of unstable coalitions were formed around the negation of an 'evil other', what Rahnema (2005) calls the main antagonism or *tazad-e asli*, which happened to be the British with their oil company. In the process of opposing the evil other, they go through a fairly short honeymoon period (Rahnema 2005: 112) and then they start to disintegrate at the affirmative phase of social movements. As such, in this period we witness various forms of antagonistic and fleeting coalitions against the Prime Minister Hazhir, the Prime Minister Razmara, the British, the Tudeh Party, the Shah, and Mosaddegh. Events such as '30th of Tir' or even '28th of Mordad' coup were the coalescing points and products of the interaction between several broad forms of coalitions. In the process of coalition formation, everyone courted everyone else but at the affirmative stage there was no stability.

In this process, every class of people can be seen in all sides. We see clerics against clerics, thugs against thugs, workers against workers, intellectuals against intellectuals, the middle class against the middle class, women against women, and selves against selves (see Rahnema 2005; Jafarian 2007).

Change in coalition structure would occur either through the drastic change in general preferences or the reordering of the components of local preferences. An example for the change in general preference is Hakamizadeh who was the son of a grand ayatollah and moved to Kasravi's secular rationalist side (Ridgeon 2006: 22), and the example of change in local preference is the change in Mosaddegh's position from being a liberal democrat to being a social democrat (Sahabi 2007: 149) and at a more situated level from his performance in the Reza Shah's assembly for changing the Qajar dynasty as a firm believer in the Quran (de Bellaigue 2012: 75; Nejati 1999) to his kissing of Queen Sorya's hand (which was referred to by Navvab Safavi's Fadaiyan Islam as a signifier of his transgression from the codes of Islamic behaviour; different contexts of situation primed different components of the preference ordering) (Mirfetros 2011). This is the overt manifestation of a theoretical dilemma fully enacted in the social reality: how can Mosaddegh's kissing of Queen Sorya's hand be reconciled with his oath to the Quran in the assembly? This brings the whole history and theory of Islam, modernity, and

Persianism into social practice. What we see at this era is the degeneration of any and every coalition at an individual (individual as a coalition of selves) or collective level into its constituent parts. The process of generation of strife, divisions, and subdivisions progresses at an astonishing speed and rate in all groups and assemblages of any colour or persuasion, from the religious to the modernist and the Persianist.

In this period while the Shah was turning into Mosaddegh—Rahnema (2005: 896) maintains that Mosaddegh had managed to awaken the Shah's internal Mosaddegh—the chaotic nature of the social order was awakening the Shah in Mosaddegh. Mosaddegh was increasingly turning or was perceived to be turning, even by his close allies like Kashani and his close friends and aids like Haerizadeh and Makki, into an unconstitutional shah himself (Sahabi 2007; Mirfetros 2011).

In that tense climate of mistrust, towards the end of Mosaddegh era, the Shah came to see Mosaddegh as the only viable option for managing Iran, as Rahnema (2005: 648) reports, and started to turn to Mosaddegh's side and ignored the demands of the British at the exact time when Mosaddegh was becoming more suspicious of what he perceived to be the conspiratorial Shah and his deceitful royal court (as the Shah and his court were moving in opposite directions and Mosaddegh was not theoretically aware of such internal inconsistencies within the royal camp). When the Shah was zigzagging in one direction, Mosaddegh was zigzagging in the opposite direction. The Shah also activated the discourse of resort to Islam against the Tudeh Party (Abrahamian 1982), which shows the Shah's inevitable promiscuity and *lakkategi*.

The whole dynamics indicates that as if the algorithm operating at the heart of the Iranian social order was as follows: 'antagonize and polarize, form a strong coalition, defeat the antagonized opposition and start infighting, find another instantiation of polarization and eliminate another evil other; and iterate this process until the total collapse of the order and its disintegration into ungovernable components; in such states resort to a final arbiter and save the order from the total collapse; repeat the same cycle'.

In the state of belated inbetweenness, middlemen of all sides can suddenly, in an example of butterfly effect, change the direction of the movement of their leaders. The leaders are led by their followers and their advisors. As they are the product of state of belated inbetweenness, they have receptivity towards diverse forms of forces and voices; we witness the same phenomenon regarding Ayatollah Khomeini and others in the Islamic Republic.

There were middlemen like Khatibi (Rahnema 2005: 914) and Rashidiyan (Rahnema 2005: 819) who connected Baqai (and his Toiler's Party) and the British with the Shah in order to attract the Shah's support for the anti-Mosaddegh coup. The Shah could be hooked to different coalitions through different middlemen as he had soft spots (local preference) for almost all of them. Almost all voices resonated something profound and meaningful for the Shah and for all others (all of whom were the product of the state of inbetweenness) as Kashani could be hooked to the Tudeh Party or America, or the British (e.g. through Sayyed Zia) and the same with Mosaddegh and the clergy. The Shah, for instance, in conversation with Khalil Malaki, a pragmatic socialist, said, 'I am a socialist' and Khalil Malaki replied, 'but socialism is against monarchy' (Amirkhosravi 1996: 185–186). Later on, in the post-1953 coup era, the Shah saw the socialism of his White Revolution as "a new original socialism" (Matin-Asgari 2013: 30).[12]

The anti-Mosaddegh coup had propaganda wings as well as the street wings. The irony is that some members of Fadaiyan Islam (Va'hedi and his circle) had joined the coalition with ultra-nationalist parties like Arya and Sumka while Nabvvab, Fadaiyan's leader, was adopting Ayatollah Boroujerdi's position of impartiality and cultural isolationism (Rahnema 2005: 1014; Jafarian 2007). While Fadaiyan Islam were involved in the assassinations of two pro-monarchy elements (Hazhir and Razmara) and a rationalist nationalist thinker (Kasravai) and were catalyst in the rise and manifestation of popular feelings against the pro-monarchy forces through the generation of climate of fear and martyrdom (Sahabi 2007; Jafarian 2007), this time they joined the opposite side and were instrumental in overthrowing their former allies.

Remarks on the Instability in the Shah and His Coalition

Ultimately, the Shah's move from a constitutional monarch to the coup leader damaged his reputation and legitimacy greatly, leading to the collapse of his dynasty in the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The Shah, however,

[12] Later on, in 1975 the Shah even ordered the manifesto of his new Rastakhiz Party to be written based on the dialectic (Milani 2011: 383). When he and his circle could not defeat socialism and 'anti-Westernism' (Shakibi 2016) through their own brand of magnanimous classical monarchy, they tried to appropriate and co-opt it within their own basket of truth, but almost nobody took the Shah seriously as a true socialist or genuine anti-West figure.

was driven to act as the final arbiter and his contradictory positions in promising to act as a constitutional monarch and reneging on it (Milani 2011) can be resolved, in the spirit of devil's advocate via constructing the best possible defence of the Shah's position, in the following way: the Shah was bound to renege on the promise of being a constitutional monarch as Iran was immersed in a turbulent market for truth where no language game including the language game of constitutional monarchy had been consensually legitimized. The constitutionalism was a new game in town and was frequently used just as a strategic ploy in the hands of various historical actors rather than a consensual framework establishing the rules of the games of life, work, and language.

Under that kind of theoretical context, the reason why the Shah behaved the way he behaved is as follows. From outset, the Shah felt under siege from all sides, effectively facing the same problem as Nasir-al-Din Shah, where the "cannonballs of sedition" were destined to rain on his "castle of mirrors" (Amanat 1997: 152). Rival figures from the army like Razmara or Zahedi or strong figures from the institution of vizier like Qavam could gather adequate support and momentum to topple him the way his father had toppled the weak Ahmad Shah Qajar. He could not trust his masters (Western allies) as they could easily replace him with a better alternative as they were perceived to have done with regard to his father and as they frequently indicated to him that he was on probation (Milani 2011: 104). The spectre of republicanism was hovering over the country as well; and the Islamists and the Tudeh Party were fancying entirely different models of political governance. These series of existential threats alongside immense pressures and expectations directed at him by the royal court and the society at large (the big Other), demanding him to act according to the parameters of a proper Persian king, would inevitably drive him to act as the final arbiter. This dynamics is implicitly attested by Bahar, as reported in Katouzian (2013: 186), when he says that "as soon as a strong man appears, he is surrounded by a few 'tramps' who would invite him to act as a Persian king". Bahar fails to contextualize the call for acting like a Persian King and attributes active agency to 'tramps' where none exists. This is another case of failure in the art of listening to the radical other (in this case the so-called 'tramps').

Unstable Coalitions in the Islamic Republic Era

It is worth noting that Iran is known to be the country of unstable coalitions (Nategh 1983; Abrahamian 1989). Coalitions appear and disappear at the speed of light in this era; they are simultaneously 'easy and impossible' (*sahl va momtane*). That famous phrase, *sahl va momtane*, captures much about Iran. The dynamism of the formation/disintegration and degeneration/regeneration or collapse/re-formation of the coalitions was succinctly captured by the following observation from Akhavi (1983: 220; emphasis added):

> *Simultaneously, shifting and even unprincipled coalitions, which have characterized the social reality of the revolution since its inception, continue to appear.* The analyst of the Iranian revolution, therefore, can only try to record the variations and *seek explanation* of their meaning in the cultural and social contexts of Iranian history.

Contrasting and even contradictory forces, voices, and faces join each other to form highly volatile and explosive coalitions to materialize their own brand of projects of reverse social engineering through collective actions. This dynamism bestows the Iranian social fabric its two paradoxical features of factionalism and strife alongside high level of connectivity and compactness.

In the language of Chehabi (1990: 223), each voice and the face carrying it has one foot in each truth camp: "the religious movements around him [i.e. Bazargan] had one foot in the Nationalist, liberal opposition to the Shah, the other in the religious camp under the leadership of Khomeini". This premise does not only apply to Bazargan and his circle, it equally applies to almost every face in the Iranian social order. Sayyed Hossein Nasr (2010), the prominent theorist of traditionalism and the doctrine of Islamic monarchy, acted as a bridge between the Shah's circle and the Islamic circles like the Allameh Tabatabai's philosophical circle, which incorporated Ayatollah Motahhari who was the prominent member of Ayatollah Khomeini's circle (Dabashi 1993; Jafarian 2007; Mirsepassi 2010: 1). The principle of 'six degrees of separation' in the formation of networks (West and Grigolini 2011: 265) has prevailed in the Iranian social fabric at a much tighter level. This means that the social space could not be clearly divided into separate camps and distinct language communities and associations with clearly demarcated competing agenda for social change within

a larger shared language game. The Iranian social space is extremely compact and factional at the same time. The compactness prevents Iran from ever turning into a failed state while the factionalism does not allow it to turn into a ‘normal country’. The compactness allows everyone to change sides and at critical moments come together against common enemy and experience the strong and exhilarating, but transient, sense of social cohesion. However, in larger portion of time the system is in the state of internal division and factional strife. These two contrasting features (compactness and factionalism) capture the dilemmas and paradoxes of being immersed in the compound state of belated inbetweenness.

Due to the loss-aversion effect, it is quite normal in the Iranian society for the realms of politics and state to be controlled by one cultural tribe, and the realms of culture and public opinion to be dominated by an entirely different cultural tribe (see Mirsepassi 2004, Milani 2011, and Matin-Asgari 2004, 2013, 2017, on how the left had colonized and monopolized the realm of culture, arts, and literature in the Shah’s reign and how the lapsed Marxists had captured the Queen’s circle and the Prime Minister Hoveida’s circle, for example). In this flurry of activities, old connections break up and new ones emerge, culminating in the emergence of new fronts, coalitions, and alliances. In the art of mixology, if one truth potion or cocktail does not work in practice, another one is prepared and tested. The whole social order is engaged in the art of mixology and alchemy. The faces occupying the positions of radicalism of different persuasions move towards pragmatism of various colours and old pragmatists become new radicals, or new radicals from the new generation fill the seats of radicalism left vacant.

The observations made by Chehabi (1990: 307–308) attests to the high level of volatility in the process of territorialization/de-territorialization (fusion/fission) in the social fabric of Iranian state of belated inbetweenness:

> The radicals of 1953–1963, the NRM/LMI [National Resistant Movement/Liberation Movement of Iran], were the moderates in 1977–1979. The self-same people who, in 1957 and 1960, had accused the leader of the National Front, Allahyar Saleh, of maintaining too much contact with the American embassy in Tehran now had privileged access to the U.S. ambassador, whom they tried to reassure about American interests.

This process leads to groups, societies, parties, organizations, and coalitions to have short lifespan or to be stillborn (see Milani 2011: 382; Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani 2018). They frequently degenerate into smaller and smaller groups until they implode into nothingness. One example among many is the case of Mosaddegh's National Front leading to the emergence of Bazargan's Liberation Movement, itself triggering the emergence of the *Mojahedin Khalgh* Organization and Sahabi's religio-nationalist group (Sahabi 2007: 227, 248–249). The Mojahedin further violently split into the Marxist and Islamic factions. The Marxist faction even split further into smaller groups. This particular genealogical trajectory of degeneration/regeneration had originated from Mosaddegh's constitutionalist nationalism and ended up in radical Marxism, passing through Bazargan' Islamic liberal constitutionalism and Mojahedin's Islamic Marxism.

As Akhavi (1983: 208) observes,

> Factions and splits have characterized the Iranian revolution. The cleavages are characteristic not only of relations between clerical and secular groups, as might be expected, but within the clergy itself.

The fact that the clergy was divided is affirmed by Abrahamian (1982: 436–437) and Jafarian (2007: 238–241), where, for example, Jafarian attests to at least four different orientations amongst the clerics regarding their political stances to the Shah's regime (see also Ayatollahi Tabaar 2018, for widespread divisions and conflicts among the clergy in the pre- and post-revolutionary era). The same observation was made regarding the Iranian left by Alaolmolki (1987: 233; see also Behrooz 2000): "This inability to unite is perhaps the most graphic demonstration of the left's collective political immaturity." The Writers' Association of Iran (*Kanun-e Nevisandegan-e Iran*) equally suffered from "internal factionalism and disagreements" (Boroujerdi 1996: 49; see also Gheissari 1997: 109–111) throughout its intermittent existence. In addition, Jafarian (2007: 378) reports about the split in *Mo'talefeh Islami* (the pro-Khomeini coalition of Islamic associations of traditional merchant class of the bazaar) between those who were in favour of armed resistance as opposed to those who preferred non-armed one (see also Moslem 2002; Abdkhodaee 1980).

The Shah coalition was equally fraught with internal strife. Naraghi (1994: 60; see also Shawcross 1988: 95), for instance, reports on how the queen *Shahbanou* Farah vehemently opposed the (in)famous Persepolis cel-

ebrations, "the" leading showcase of the Shah's projection of power and magnanimity, and how she "succeeded, with tact and delicacy, in bringing the detractors of her husband's policies right into the palace". Naraghi (1994: 59) also observes that "At times the views of the Shah and Farah were so far at odds that the government officials no longer knew which way to turn". The same disease of excessive division was reported to have plagued the opposition of the Islamic Republic by Homayoun (2004).

In the post-revolutionary era, the anti-Shah, Khomeini-based coalition degenerated in successive stages, which was triggered by strong and weak events such as the first referendum on the nature of new political system, the conflict over the rights and obligations of various ethnicities, the process of writing of the new constitution, the imposition of veiling on women in the public space, the implementation of the law of retribution (*qesas*) in the criminal justice system, the land reform, the Iran hostage crisis, the management of Iran-Iraq war and the role of private and public sectors in the management of economy, the attempted Nouzhe coup against the system (with alleged involvement of Ayatollah Shariatmadari and Qotbzadeh) (*see* Hiro 2013), the treatment of the political prisoners (split with Ayatollah Montazeri), the Rushdie affair (serious rift with the West), post-war reconstruction policies of liberalization and deregulation and advocacy for socio-economic freedom (the split with Hashemi Rafsanjani), and in the instigation of Khatami's reform movement (advocacy for political freedom) and its reincarnation in the Green Movement.

Banisadr (1981: 173),[13] the first president of Iran, enumerates some of these bewildering arrays of rifts in the following terms:

> conflicts between the clergy, happening also at the top level of "sources of emulation" (*marjas*); the conflict between new institutions and within these institutions among different orientations; creation of conflicts with the political groups while taking the position of eliminating them; the conflict between the new and the old institutions; the conflict within the religious-political closed circles participating in the Khomeini's leadership: [in the cases of] provisional government of Bazargan, Islamic Republic Party and us [Banisadr's circle], the conflict was more with the provisional government in the beginning and then with both; foreign conflicts; regional conflicts; conflicts in the articulation of Islam; ….

[13] See also Akhavi (1987: 198), Behrooz (1991), Siavoshi (1992), Moslem (2002).

These conflicts caused the gradual degeneration of the original anti-Shah coalition led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Banisadr (1981: 161) captures this dynamics succinctly where he refers to both sides of the conflict embarking on the gradual process of mutual destruction in a war of attrition (*namadmali*) between his circle and the rest of Khomeini's coalition:

> We and they, both, were using Khajeh Nasireddin Tousi's method in gradually pressurizing the other to death (*namadmali*); they were restricting the power of the president and we were discrediting them amongst different classes of people in the society. … Khomeini himself told me that you want to destroy me.

These observations demonstrate that any relation in the state of belated inbetweenness is highly unstable and volatile, and prone to inherent high dose of mistrust (Abrahamian 1993: 4, 127–128) and sudden surge of animosity and antagonism. Alliances and friendships suddenly and unexpectedly turn sour and waves of animosity and incriminations engulf the coalitional relations. Old enemies become friends and old friends become enemies at a remarkable speed.

This is strong evidence that all socio-political groups, classes, and communities whether in power or in opposition, religious or non-religious, left or right, political or non-political, within the state or in the civil society have been plagued by internal divisions and have been subject to the dynamical workings of the state of belated inbetweenness.

The dominant and driving force behind the process of coalition formation is negation and antagonism of being 'against something' (a common enemy) rather than affirmative force of being 'for something'. Basically, the negation of a common enemy motivates the formation of coalitions and the affirmation of any project of reverse social engineering prompts the disintegration of the coalitions (see Bazargan 1984). And this dynamics is evident in the Katouzian's (2013: 110) description of the post-revolutionary processes:

> The single unifying aim of overthrowing the Shah and the state having been achieved, it was now time for each party to try, not to share, but to grab as much as possible the spoils of the revolution. Apart from the virtually powerless liberal groups, headed by Bazargan's provisional government, most of the players were highly suspicious of one another's motives, hoping to try to

eliminate their rivals as best they could from the realm of political power. Apart from the liberals no one was interested in sazesh (compromise), the dirty word of Iranian politics.

The 'no compromise solution', frequently mentioned and lamented in the Katouzian's writings, is due to the absence of a common logic of 'give and take' and 'agree to disagree' and lack of legitimate method of arriving at the mutual recognition of all truth entrepreneurs and interlocutors (on "*Compromise and Rotten Compromises*", see Margalit 2009). Cultural tribes with irreconcilable truth claims were fighting each other to death. This was motivated by the emergence of irreconcilable differences on all small and large issues of life, work, and language, which is the natural outcome of the operations of addition and subtraction on the three regimes of truth with their internal divisions. Abrahamian (2008: 169) attests to this fact in the following observation:

> Many lay people—royalists, leftists, secular nationalists, and members of the intelligentsia—tended to look down upon the clergy as out of place in the contemporary world. They certainly did not consider them capable of running a modern state.

The clergy inevitably reciprocated such negative sentiments towards almost all others from the intellectuals, to the monarchists, and the Westernizers (see Ayatollahi Tabaar 2018). This was inevitable due to the dictates of their rival grids of intelligibility. Each incumbent force with any colour or persuasion would find itself 'under siege' from all angles. As Abrahamian (1993: 131) points out,

> One does not compromise and negotiate with spies and traitors [or reactionary, despotic, backward, misogamist, criminal or oppressive forces, for instance]; one locks them up or else shoots them.

How can one compromise with the forces of evil and darkness? This demonstrates that the notion of compromise is highly undertheorized, especially in the state of belated inbetweenness. We need to theorize why *sazesh* is the dirty word of Iranian politics. This certainly was not due to the conscious decisions of the Iranian elites or their bad faith or evilness of the Iranian people. Consequently, the volatility of coalitions and the existence of 'no compromise solution' was the inevitable default position in the state of belated inbetweenness.

Conclusion

This chapter shows how Islam, modernity, and Persianism were interwoven in each other in so many ways despite being independent from each other and how numerous voices emerge out of their interactions. Voices are generated out of combination of forces. Due to the irreconcilable differences, these voices cannot form stable coalitions required to achieve social changes prompted by the state of belatedness and its associated development gap. For catching-up, belated societies like Iran need stable and functional institutions like school, army, bank, court, and so on to achieve development. For that, they need to form stable coalitions, which are almost impossible due to the irreconcilable differences and resulting mutual mistrust between the voices whose internal constitutions are markedly different from each other due to the different level and degree of exposure to Islam, modernity, and Persianism. Examples were given on how this dynamics come into play amongst the Iranian diaspora and the Iranians inside the country through the loss-aversion effect, leading to the state of being diasporic or in exile as the permanent state of mind amongst the Iranians whether inside or outside the country. This chapter shows the widespread and deep level of divisions and mistrust among the Iranians inside or outside the country, within or outside the power, and attests to the division within the Iranian selfhood as the fold of the outside. It shows how the transient cultural tribes and warlords fight with each other on every small or large issue. This tendency was theorized using the insights from Arrow's impossibility theorem, and the rich empirical evidence was provided on the prevalence of mistrust and strife among the Iranians of various strands. It was demonstrated that the state of belated inbetweenness can be clearly demarcated and distinguished from the notions such as multiculturalism, clash of civilizations, and postmodernism. A set of examples from different eras of the Iranian modern history were provided to make the theoretical points more tangible. Now, the stage is set for us to enter the explorations of how the state of tragedy of confusion in association with the state of formation of unstable coalitions would frequently lead to the emergence of dysfunctional institutions in the modern history of Iran.

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CHAPTER 6

Institutional Failure

Introduction: The Paradox of Institutional Design

In the last 200 years, Iran has been suffering from what Akhavi (1998: 696) calls "the paradox of institutionalization failure". The evolutionary theorization of institutions demonstrates that institutions emerge, they are not designed (Popper 1961). They are the products of evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization and not the products of intelligent design. Even when there is an element of conscious design involved in their construction, the consciousness itself is the emergent product of the cultural evolution of the regimes of truth alongside the fact that the interaction between the conscious and unconscious decisions and actions of multiple agents give rise to the emergence of institutions (as such institutions are embedded, incommensurable, and emergent phenomena). North (1990, 2005) attests that institutions make life predictable and stable as they establish the rules of the game in different realms of work, life, and language. Institutions such as constitution, money, language, market, court, family, state, and church—as Hayek (1988) alongside Sugden (1989) and Heiner (1989) theorizes them—are the spontaneous and unintended products of cultural evolutionary processes. In effect, in the context of development, we face two types of institutional changes in the social order, the engineered ones versus the evolutionary ones. Pioneering countries and peoples benefit from the first-mover advantage and sleepwalk into the new institutions through the evolutionary process of blind watchmaking via the work of "vanishing mediators" (Jameson 1988: 25) or "piecemeal

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tinkering" (Popper 1961: 61) while the belated societies are forced to build the new institutions required to fill the development gap through intelligent design (largely through a 'copy-paste' process from the pioneering nations).

The dilemma of how to be a good follower in the process of catching-up with the West is evident in Malkam Khan's London lecture (1891). His main question was why we are backward, and the West is advanced. He activates his own discourse of decline (rather than the discourse of the West's emergent exceptionalism). He tests and refutes a series of hypotheses on the secrets of the decline of Muslim world and ultimately comes to the conclusion that now that we are not civilizational pioneers we have to think about how we can become good copyists and "copy" and "imitate" the Western model of modernity successfully (see Malkam Khan 1891: 240; see also Ansari 2012: 65, footnote 104, for the two similar notions of *akhz*, adoption, and *eqtebas*, acquisition, in circulation in the post-Constitutional era). This is what Rasolzadeh, one of the leading intellectual figures in the Constitutional era, dubbed as having been invited to the party of Western modernity and having the opportunity to benefit from the fruits of their historical endeavours for free (the second-mover advantage), in what he called *polo-khori* (literally 'eating cooked rice'), having ready-made 'free lunch' as in the *Muharram* rituals (see Abadian 2009a, b).

For the reformists and the revolutionaries, the West had the blueprints for a functional constitution, court system, government, parliament, formation of national army, political parties, schools, universities, railroads, hospitals, police force, free press, gender relations, family life, and so on. Everything modern was there ready to be adopted. Modernizers would go to the West or were exposed to their writings and would bring textbooks for establishing new institutions as gifts to the nation. The modernizers have been the messianic forces of salvation bringing the good news to a trapped nation and could not fathom why the people would resist and rebel against the spread of modernity. To use the benefits associated with the second-mover advantage, however, countries need social cohesion and collective togetherness, which, due to the state of belated inbetweenness, does not exist in the troubled societies like Iran.

Modernity through its totalizing, globalizing, and proselytizing nature forced belated societies to either embark on a drastic process of reverse social engineering of life, work, and language or die. In the case of

encountering Islam or any other invaders in the pre-modern era, for instance, social change could not be turned into an engineering project; rather a gradual process of bringing all components together was largely at work via a process of trial and error, blind watchmaking, and chaotic synchronization. Even limited attempts of intelligent design in the form of attempts for conversion of the indigenous people left most local institutions intact. The process of blind watchmaking applies, for instance, to the process of emergence and spread of universities, modern family, new sexualities, political parties, voting systems, constitutional monarchy, and emergence of cinema in the pioneering world. In the case of the institution of cinema or political parties, for instance, they started from embryonic stages, which in interactions with other components of society co-evolved gradually in a process involving vanishing mediators. The same process of gradual and incremental changes happened with regard to the emergence and evolution of highways, for instance, in the pioneering contexts. The social institutions need to go through 'seven stages of maturation' (*haft khan-e Rostam or haft shahr-e eshgh*). The pioneering societies have had the chance to go through the seven stages of gradual process of capacity and consensus building through vanishing mediators (see Keyssar 2000 for the example of 'the right to vote' in America).

The paradoxical situation faced by belated societies was that without immediate changes to their life forms, they would be crushed under the military, cultural, or economic weights of modernity (as was the case in Iran, Russia, China, or Japan in their encounters with modernity), and with immediate changes prompted by and adopted from the pioneering models through the process of reverse social engineering, they would face a set of dysfunctionalities and deformities associated with rootless institutions, leading to the emergence of and immersion into the Fanon's zone of occult instability (for the example of dysfunctionalities in the Iranian road system and driving culture, see Banakar 2015; the same patterns apply to almost any other institution in any other walks of life, work, or language). The successful belated societies like Japan managed to handle this paradoxical situation by deploying their old institutions and their associated common culture and social cohesion to achieve rapid social transformation while the rest either plunged into decades of turmoil, dysfunctionalities, and instabilities or were annihilated from the face of the earth (like many aboriginal communities). The following sections demonstrate how this paradoxical dynamics functions in more details.

Game Theory and Institutions

Some theorists model the emergence and change in the institutional and structural landscape of societies using the tools of game theory (Binmore 1994–1998, 2005; Skyrms 2004). The work of game theorists demonstrates that the process of establishing institutions can be modelled as a coordination game. Lewis (1969) modelled the emergence of language, convention, and propositional justification and belief as a coordination game. Ross (2010, added emphasis) demonstrates that:

> The basic insight can be captured using a simple example. The word 'chicken' denotes chickens and 'ostrich' denotes ostriches. We would not be better or worse off if 'chicken' denoted ostriches and 'ostrich' denoted chickens; however, we would be worse off if half of us used the pair of words the first way and half the second, or if all of us randomized between them to refer to flightless birds generally. This insight, of course, well preceded Lewis; but what he recognized is that this situation has the logical form of a coordination game. Thus, *while particular conventions may be arbitrary, the interactive structures that stabilize and maintain them are not.*

Ross (2010) further observes that:

> In coordination (and other) games with multiple NE [Nash Equilibria], it is known that what counts as a solution is highly sensitive to conjectures made by players about one another's beliefs and computational ability.

This is exactly where the problem arises in the Iranian context. In the context of the confused agents, reading the mind of the other agents and even their own minds becomes problematic, and achieving a stable functional equilibrium on, for example, dress codes, and rules and norms of beautification, fashion, and gender division of labour (see Cronin 2014; Tizro 2012; Moaveni 2005; Paidar 1995, among others), becomes almost impossible. The society wanders off between rival options without any form of irreversible resolution of the problem in the form of: 'all adhere to the Western codes' or 'all adhere to the Islamic codes' or 'all adhere to the Persianist codes', or 'let people move between them freely'. What emerges in practice is numerous combinations of the above options, leading to the dysfunctional institutions of clothing, beautification, fashion, and gender division of labour throughout Iranian modern history. Everyone's acceptable threshold of clothing, beautification, fashion, and gender division is

different from everyone else's. The same applies to almost every other small or big issue of life, work, and language.

The dilemmas and crises depicted by a simple coordination game with multiple equilibria can shed considerable light on the institutional failure in the Iranian context. The Iranian case of multiple equilibria is an example of a social order torn between Persianism, Islam, or modernity, or a viable and stable combination of them. The presence of irreconcilable differences between and within social assemblages turns the win-win coordination game of institutional design into the lose-lose prisoner's dilemma (PD) game of institutional failure, where no long-term mutually beneficial equilibrium can be established. Hardin (1995) shows how the Yugoslavian civil war of 1991–1995 and the 1994 Rwandan genocide can be analysed "as Prisoner's Dilemmas (PDs) that were nested inside coordination games" (Ross 2010).

Due to the failure in achieving a stable outcome in the framework of the coordination game and the ensuing social disorder and personal dissatisfactions, the dynamic of the search for a unified and coherent identity triggers a chain of reactions leading to strong events such as revolutions and large social movements in order to solve the problem of non-coordination once and for all. In this context, the coordination game turns into a prisoner's dilemma through the play of identity politics.

Here one component of Iranian multiple identity strives to eradicate the traces of the others once and for all by either incorporating the main attractive discursive and non-discursive practices affiliated to the other truth packages or eliminating them from the public discourses and practices, and annihilating their main outspoken figures and loyal followers. In other words, the logic and language of 'either with us or against us' is at its full force and is practised by all sides of the truth divide. While in reality, Islam, Persianism, and modernity—which are themselves unities in multiplicities (Flynn 2005: 357)—interact and combine in innumerable forms of permutations to generate different shades of multiplicities of ways of being, seeing, and speaking, the violence of unified identity (negating dimension of 'the imaginary order') ignores (or is unable to find a new satisfactory unified identity) these multiplicities in search of pure unities in order to solve the urgent issue of non-coordination.

A brief example of how these paradigms of truth interact in reality to produce new combinations are as follows: modernity is materialized through the establishment of nation-states, which requires a national identity which further fuels demands for resources embedded in the Shia

Islam and/or Persianism. This generates a demand to form a viable narrative out of resources of Islam and/or Persianism, made compatible with modernity. This in turn leads to the emergence of three incompatible forms of Islamic nationalism, Persianist nationalism, and modernist nationalism, and a variety of combinations of them with different priorities, emphases, elisions, and silences. The three strong events of the modern Iranian history (the Constitutional Revolution, the Oil Nationalization Movement, and the 1979 Islamic Revolution) are the manifestations of the efforts to find a stable equilibrium for a sense of national identity as a case of multiple equilibria. Iranians could not settle down on any of those pure forms of nationalism or any combinations of them.

If we adopt three criteria offered by Hilbert (consistency, completeness, and decidability) for the assessment of mathematical systems (see Floridi 2004) as a heuristic guide for the assessment of socio-economic philosophies and policies (as Foucault's typological and axiomatic moves require; see Flynn 2005), we will demonstrate the disorienting array of inconsistencies, incompletenesses, and undecidabilities at the heart of the social life throughout the Iranian modern history. As such, all areas of life from economy, to culture and art, to family, education, health, security and crime, justice, social freedom, morality, legal arrangements, and foreign policy have become the battlegrounds for alternative regime of truths without ever settling in any coherent set of vocabularies, philosophies, or policies. Institutional investments, as a result, encounter abortions, reversals or deformities and dysfunctionalities. Hence, this study shows how these relentless and undecidable battles over fundamentals of social life have produced constant shifts in the position of individuals and groups, and formed unstable coalitions and alliances. Some brief examples of these turf wars over languages, philosophies, and policies are as follows.

In the realm of economic life, the questions regarding 'the truth about things of this world' revolve around the questions such as the following: should we give priority to the pursuit of self-interest (which is by and large condemned in the language of religious and Persianist texts but deeply rooted in the language of modernity and economics at least in its current form) or should we order our economy based on the will to serve (God and/or people)? This battle over the vocabulary (Rorty 1989) and content about the binary opposition of self-interest/service, selfishness/altruism, materialism/spiritualism, earthly economics/godly economics has paralysed economic life in Iran for more than a century (see Ahmadi Amoui 2006; Pesaran 2011; Amirahmadi 2012, for example). In the Shah era, Ayatollah Khomeini, for instance, maintained that:

> It is our selfishness and abandonment of an uprising for God that have led to our present dark days and subjected us to world domination. It is selfishness that has undermined the Muslim world. (Moin 1999: 60)

Azimi (2008: 316) reports how "pleasure loving" students "were harassed by both the left and the right" in the last decade of the Shah's rule. Ghorashi (2003: 88–108) documents how in the early years of the revolution, even among the Marxist groups, sexual desires were repressed and 'being political, going to prison, self-sacrifice, embracing death and becoming martyrs' were highly valued and sought after. Naraghi (2018) attests how the various issues surrounding sexual freedom are serious stumbling blocks for the religious reformist intellectuals like Soroush and Kadivar in embracing liberalism.

The binary opposition of ethics of service and devotion to higher purposes versus the pursuit of self-interest and material well-being affected the economic policy of the Islamic Republic in the conflict between Prime Minister Mousavi and the head of the Organization for Budget and Planning Roghani Zanjani and his economic deputy Masoud Nili as Ahmadi Amoui (2006: 189–191; see also Nasr 1989; Chittick 2007; Furlow 2005; Gohardani 2017) reports. As attested by Afkhami (2009: ix), Ayatollah Khomeini

> sublimated warfare to jihad, soldiers to martyrs, and death to salvation. He redefined in Islamist terms human felicity, social progress, economic development, individual freedom, and popular sovereignty.

As such, the pursuit of self-interest and ethics of service have been denoted and connoted differently in the vocabulary and lifeworld of Islam, Persianism, and modernity. This binary opposition between selfishness and selflessness captures the essence of Persian poetry and Quranic teachings and is theorized in the Molla Sadra's transcendental philosophy of *four journeys* (Rizvi 2009: 30). The valorization of enlightened greed, self-interest, animal spirit, and selfishness as the engine of socio-economic progress in modernity comes into direct conflict with the deep and wide admonishing of selfishness in the Persian poetry and Islamic teachings.

We may also continue to ask: how can the institution of property rights and its associated discursive and non-discursive practices be harmonized with the needs and requirements of social justice and/or the belief and commitment to faith? In his London speech, Malkam Khan (1891: 239), one of the leading figures of the Constitutional era, summarizes the relation between property rights and prosperity in the following terms:

> certain facts are self-evident. Without security of life and property, no progress—without justice, no freedom—without freedom, no national prosperity, no individual contentment and peace.

How can the institutionalized respect for "security of life and property" be reconciled with the need for political stability and security where in the state of belated inbetweenness the economic power is frequently deployed to change the political system, turning economic activities into the issues of national security? How can the excessive use of sexual signs and symbols as inputs in the production of goods and services in the modern life be reconciled with the Islamic laws of chastity and Persianist ethics of public decency? How can the notion of Halal and Haram investments in Islam or banning of *riba* (usury) be coordinated with the role of gambling, sex, alcohol, and interest in the modern business world and modern banking system? What is the road map through which we can reach a viable consensus on the parameters of the business atmosphere, setting the stable, formal and informal, terms of "licence to operate" (see Sadler 2002, chapter 10) to generate trust and optimism amongst investors and entrepreneurs towards the socio-economic system? No option seems to be able to overcome the other in order to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the people and no consensus appears to be ever emerging.

Another example is in the realm of defining relations with the West and Arabs, the first world and the third world. Should the Iranians form stable alliances with the West and Israel against the Arabs (as the dominant philosophy of the last kingdom in Iran was) or should they form stable coalitions with their Muslim brothers (inside the larger notion of *ummah*) and the oppressed third world against the oppressors of the West and Israel (as the philosophy of the current order in Iran implies; see Parsi 2008; Dabashi 2010: 65, for instance)? Should we prioritize our national interests over any other concerns, or should we sacrifice our interests for the good of the Islamic community at large and the oppressed people of the world (modern nationalism versus Islamic and oppressed-people-of-the-world internationalism; see Hovsepian-Bearce 2016: 86; Ahmadi 2007; Sheikh 2003, for instance)? Here we encounter three forms of nationalism and three forms of internationalism—Islamic nationalism and internationalism of Shia and Sunni strands (Martin 2013; Tibi 2014), modern nationalism and internationalism of socialist and liberal types, and multiple shades of Persianist nationalism and internationalism of literary humanism and/or Indo-Europeanism of Aryan type—coming into manifold forms of intermingling and conflicts with each other.

None of the possible solutions has gained legitimacy and supremacy over the others so that they could irreversibly be turned into the axioms of foreign policy. This dynamics turns into a perfect case of "significatory or representational undecidability" (Bhabha 1988: 19). Whatever policy is pursued, a wave of discontent and disillusionment is created (just like Sophie's choice in the concentration camp; see McConnell 2010) leading to the constant tensions and sudden shifts and zigzag metamorphoses in policy and affectivity. One should not think of any social assemblage in the Iranian modern history as a disciplined and unified force. There is evident factionalism among their ranks and files as well as their leaderships over these issues. In the realm of economy, for instance, should we allow direct foreign investment in the country or not? In the case of letting the foreigners in, should we be content with 'infidels' taking charge of Muslim affairs and lands and properties or should we not be concerned as long as they generate employment, wealth, and prosperity? If we let the foreigners in, would they not bring their own lifestyles and philosophies in direct opposition to our way of life and our ethos, which would contaminate our purity and our pride and corrupt our youth and erode our morality, our family life, and our social fabric alongside our prospect of eternal salvation? (see Avini 1997, and Euben 1999, on the critique and limits of modernity; see also Tripp 2006, 2013; Dabashi 2010; Zaidi 2011; Mirsepassi 2017; Badamchi 2017). Should we gain the economic prosperity at the cost of spiritual decadence?

Would it be rational to exchange the impermanent benefits of this world at the expense of losing permanent payoffs associated with eternal salvation? Is it not true that such an exchange is utter madness? Would they not use the realm of economy to change our faith? What is the price we are ready to pay for establishing normal relations with the outside world? Should it be at the cost of losing our eternal happiness in our hereafter? Or is the fact that these foreigners (largely Westerners) are not infidels, they are our brothers in Aryan race and Indo-European language family or in the family of Abrahamic faith or are brothers in mankind and we must form stable alliances with them against the true aliens like the Arabs and/or Russians? (see Zia-Ebrahimi 2016, for instance, on 'Aryan nationalism').

Ultimately, how can we reconcile the three distinct forces of Persianism, Islam, and modernity with their three contrasting structures of power/knowledge and affectivities, discursive formations and institutional arrangements, and their associated negating facets of repression, disavowal, and

foreclosure in different realms of life from diplomacy to polity, economy, art, security, family and gender relation, sexuality, death, education, and entertainment? All these are entirely unclear and undecidable, and the society has become an experimental lab for the alternative solutions implemented through the mechanism of reverse social engineering due to the requirements of state of belatedness, leading to constant reversals, abortions, and restructuring and a 200-year whirlwind of waste of time, energy, and resources which marks the socio-economic underdevelopment in Iran. The collective preference reversals and time inconsistencies manifested in moving from the Qajars to the Constitutional Revolution, to Pahlavi dynasty, to Mosaddegh era, to Islamic Revolution and beyond ultimately lead to frequent money-pump cycles (see Suzumura 2016: 138, 252) and economic haemorrhage, one of whose manifestations is the case that Iran's per capita income in 2016 reached to 70 percent of its level in 1976 (Nili 2016).[1] In the case of Iran, the money-pump cycles and economic haemorrhage occur through revolutions or wars, and small and large crises, uprisings and movements, manifesting themselves in socio-political instability and low productivity, brain drain and capital flight associated with the zone of occult instability, and socio-economic uncertainty (see Amuzegar 2014; Maloney 2015; Gohardani 2017; Brew 2017).

The experience of institutional failure and its associated dysfunctionalities and deformities, consequently, breeds discontent and waves of social upheavals, producing the repeated patterns and subtle regularities which have roots in the tragic 'context of multiple regimes of truth' in interaction with the state of belatedness and its manifestation in Iranian confused mind and identity crises. This process with its associated regularities and surprises leads to long-term political instability and socio-economic stagnation, producing the development gap between Iran and Japan whose development journeys started roughly at the same time, with Japan serving as an exemplar for the Iranian psyche and Iran striving to become Islamic Japan or "new Japan" (Schayegh 2010: 41). This will suggest a general equilibrium (or disequilibrium) and co-evolutionary theory of the Iranian social life relating economy to politics, religion, morality, culture, and mind whereby various forms of hybrid and interdisciplinary analyses are needed.

It should be noted that such a theoretical framework starts to fill the gap in the four-level analysis offered by Williamson (2000, 2005, 2010), especially at the level of mind and its associated layers of embeddedness, emergence, and incommensurability. In a sense, there is almost always a social

[1] It is worth noting that Salehi-Isfahani (2018) questions the logic behind Nili's calculation and offers significantly different evaluation of his own.

process behind the mechanism of price formation[2] and this study is an attempt to unravel the "underlying forces operating beneath supply and demand" (Zafirovski 2000: 277) and the hyper-complex processes operating behind the price signals guiding the allocation of scarce resources and determining the nature of governance structures, institutional arrangements, and socio-economic development. This relates to the relation between wealth creation and truth creation as Foucault (1980: 93–94) conceives it:

> In the last analysis, we must produce truth as we must produce wealth, indeed we must produce truth in order to produce wealth in the first place.

This statement, in a way, succinctly captures the hypothesis of this study. The failure in the production of truth in the Iranian modern history has led to the failure in the production of wealth.

In a sense, this study is an attempt to have another go at the Foucault's attempt to map the Iranian regime of truth[3]:

> the events in Iran, he proposed, cannot be captured by traditional categories like Marxism, for Iranians 'don't have the same regime of truth as ours' (Moaddel 2011: 127).

The tragedy of confusion alongside the impossibility of formation of stable coalitions and failures in establishing functional institutions has culminated in the emergence of a chaotic order in the modern history of Iran, shaping the price and non-price factors involved in determination of the nature of socio-economic development.

The essence of institutional failure resides in the fact that the common beliefs, informal norms and formal laws, and mechanisms of enforcement as the bases of institutions (North 1990, 2005) cannot emerge in the state of belated inbetweenness. Due to the irreconcilable differences on almost all small or large issues of life, work, and language, no common belief or common norms or laws can emerge, and even when they are constructed artificially through the process of intelligent design and reverse social engineering, they cannot be consistently and systematically implemented. The

[2] See Latour (1987), Zafirovski (2000), Roth (2007) and Shaikh (2016) on this important point, see also Connolly (2011: 37) and his critique of the notion of externality in economics; see also Dodd 2014.

[3] For a much less contextually theorized but similar notion, see the use of the notion of 'symbolic interactionism' in Dabashi (2010: 209–10).

process of building a modern army, for instance, which started by Abbas Mirza in the first half of the nineteenth century, still has not been successfully accomplished (Afshon 2016; Ward 2014; Cronin 1997). The army is as dysfunctional as any other institution in the Iranian modern history. The same applies to the banking system or the institution of veiling (Sedghi 2007: 212) or to schools, hospitals, and universities or the legal system, among others. The same deformities and dysfunctionalities are experienced at almost all institutional levels.

Examples of Institutional Failures

This section provides examples of institutional failure or success from the Constitutional era, the ONM era, and the era of Islamic Republic.

Institutional Failure in the Constitutional Era

This section embarks on exploring the disruptions, reversals, abortions, and deformities experienced in the process of conception, gestation, birth, growth, and maturity of institutions via the example of the institution of nation-state.[4] The failure in the emergence of institution of nation-state is compared to the success in the emergence of the institution of *Muharram* rituals in this era. In effect, in this era the Iranians managed to cooperate and compete collectively with each other in the framework of *Muharram* rituals but not in the framework of a nation-state.

After encountering modernity, people from all segments of society were invited to participate, at different scales, in the language games or tournaments of economy (how to produce, distribute, and consume modern goods and services), polity, art, sports, education, gender relation, security (army, police, and intelligence services), and foreign policy. While in the game of religious rituals of *Muharram* people from all segments of society, and despite all of their differences, knew how to participate in the game and could, as Aghaie (2005: 379) maintains, contribute “in their own way, either financially or by donating their possessions or services”, they lacked this largely tacit and unconscious knowhow with regard to the modern institutions. As Aghaie (2005: 379) attests,

[4] The extensive discussions on the failure in building other institutions (such as constitution, polity, banking system, legal system, and education) could not be incorporated in this work due to word limitations.

> Every ritual became a massive cooperative project in which a variety of social relationships, such as those between elites and their various subordinates, were expressed and strengthened.

All the conflicts and rivalries and juggling for power and pursuits of interests, and their associated emotional economies were at work in this communal tournament. This social assemblage was a tripartite assemblage with all of its diverse components. In its dimension of the real, it went far beyond the approved measures and standards and entered the realm of theatre and became a domain of rhizomatic and criss-crossed hybridization. It was frequently turned into a site of various forms of monstrosities and bastardities. This provided a space where different forms of Shi'ism could compete with each other, as this was the space where the Qajar shah's Shia could compete with the clergy's one through *Ta'zia* (Amanat 1997) and both with the Shia of ordinary people at the level of politics of ordinary. As Amanat (1997: 434–435) reports,

> The [Nasir-al-Din] shah's expressions of religiosity beyond regular prayer and fasting, which he keenly recorded in all his travel diaries, also included an active patronage of the ta'ziya, the Shi'ite passion plays commemorating the martyrdom of Husayn and the sufferings of his house. …The shah's love for the ta'ziya cannot be attributed merely to a fondness for dramatic arts nor to a mundane desire to glance through binoculars at the nobility, particularly the women, sitting in private boxes reserved for "society." A deeper reason for the shah's consistent support for the ta'ziya was a conscious desire to preserve an alternative form of Shi'ism, even in the face of the 'ulama's vociferous disapproval.

This paragraph demonstrates how the society achieved social cohesion through the Muharram rituals and exhibits how in the common space of Muharram rituals the whole society, men, women, the shah, the *ulama*, the ordinary people, and the elites came together, mixing the symbolic/imaginary dimensions of these rituals with rhizomatic, a-signifying, and unsymbolized one of turning it into a fanfare and a market for sensuality and sexuality alongside taking the rituals far beyond the control of the clergy. The subtleties and complexities of this cooperative institution providing a place for all "within the cooperative venture of organising rituals" (Aghaie 2005: 379) is astonishing. The successful yearly enactment of this religious ritual refutes the psychologism hypothesis of those who claim that Iranians are individualistic and incapable of collective ventures (see Abrahamian 1982, 1993; Katouzian 2010).

The people of Iran were scaffolded and subjectified in the rules of the game of religious rituals and their meanings for centuries, especially from the Safavid era.[5] Thus, the Shia regime of truth in coalition with Persian monarchy/mythology had managed to construct this language game and make its meanings and religious denotations and connotations intelligible in the larger picture of the emergence of Islam, the missions of the prophets, the impermanence of life, the place of Shia Imams, and the perpetual war of good against evil (the Heideggerian fourfold).

To institutionalize these rituals, an army of educators (religious clergies and other functionaries) reiterate and perform their main components every year throughout the country, in rural and urban settings. These rituals have gradually evolved in a process of chaotic synchronization involving rhizomatic and arborescent movements in linguistic and non-linguistic dimensions of social assemblages. In the process of gradual emergence of *Muharram* rituals, Iranians had managed to incorporate elements from pre-Islamic Persia and mix it with Shia theology and rituals alongside assimilating elements of Christian iconography and rites, and formed a cohesive whole out of all of them as an institution in which people could perform the discursive and non-discursive practices associated with the Shia Islam in contradistinction to the Sunni Islam and Christianity (Niazmand 2004; Dabashi 2011: 92).

In contrast, the new game of constitutional government, which required participation and cooperation of different classes of people, was totally unfamiliar to the Iranian *dasein*. They did not know how to play this new game; they did not know what the ontology, epistemology, methodology, ethics, and aesthetics behind it were, and they did not own it in a gradual process of evolutionary change. As such, its terms and associated passions and emotions did not become part of discursive and non-discursive practices of people in everyday life. People were not trained through formal and informal education to understand the philosophy, the stories and narratives, the small talks, the tacit knowledge, the knowhow and comportments, and the discursive and non-discursive practices behind the institutions of constitution, *Majlis*, election, constitutional monarchy, and how and why these institutions emerged in the first place and how and

[5] For Shia Islam, see Tabatabai (1979), Sobhani (2001), Jafarian (2009), Niazmand (2004), Thurfjell (2006), Dabashi (2011), Ridgeon (2012), Mavani (2013), Hughes (2013), and Arjomand (2016), among others.

why they went through different stages of development and how their latest reincarnations compared with the earlier ones.

The discourse of freedom and its relation to the notions of transgression and compromise (see Sohrabi 2012: 119) had not been even started to be incorporated into the worldhood of the Iranian *dasein* and its dictionary and did not have time to develop its own unique denotations and connotations the way the Americans, for instance, have managed to develop their unique relations with gun ownership (Halliwell 2008: 224) and the Japanese with regard to the social norm of committing suicide (where the self-help book on how to commit suicide became a bestseller) (Kingston 2004: 265–268; see also Iga 1986).

Thus, at the time the constitutional order had arrived as a hasty package (Abadian 2006; Kasravi 1994) and had to be absorbed by different classes of people without going through the co-evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization and harmonization with other notions and practices such as justice, piety, spirituality, morality, sexuality, vice and virtue (*amr-e be maroof va nah'ye az monkar*), national and international interests, body and its relation to permanence and impermanence, and the Heideggerian fourfold of gods, mortals, sky, and earth, and the relation between people, as new source of legitimacy, with kingship and divinity (the relation between the intellectual, the Persian king, and the clergy and their corresponding sources of authority and truth, namely, people, king, and God).

In such a process of reverse social engineering, it was not at all clear how the will of people could be aggregated and reconciled and harmonized with the will of the king and the will of God. It was not clear at all when the conflicts arise between these alternative sources of truth and authority what needed to take precedence over what and why. It was not clear what happens when the people themselves opt to make their own will subservient to what they perceived to be the better judgements emanating from the will of the king or the will of God; the people may frequently see themselves as addicts who are seduced by the pleasures of the flesh promised and delivered by modernity and consequently willingly submit themselves to the warnings and tough love of the king or the poet (Persianism) or the clergy (Islam). As such, people may rebel against themselves and willingly transfer the authority to the king or the clergy (meta-preference overriding and vetoing preferences) (see Elster's constraint theory, 2015).

These alternative forms of rationalities were the realms of competing sensibilities and imaginaries with contradictory set of priorities. The people might have preferred Akhundzadeh's free love or consumption of

alcohol but were endowed with a meta-preference questioning such preferences and desires. The people in the face of encounter with bigger truth frequently question their own desires and behaviours. As such their revealed behaviours and expressed desires cannot be the ultimate guide to or decider of what they want; rather whether they can defend the truth of their own behaviours and desires in the court of meta-preference (desires over desires). Sometimes people do not want to desire what they desire; instead they desire to have better desires for themselves, for their families, communities, or nations. Hence, in this era we see frustrated modernists frequently attacking the people, as Katouzian (2008: 285–286) reports, for their backwardness and for their constant changing of colours and their being chameleon-like (Mir 1993).

The *Muharram* institution is an exhibition of what Iranian society could become in the Constitutional era but never was; in a sense it was the Japanese face of the Iranian society, where the elites and the people could work together, by in large, for the common purpose and achieve coherence rather than fragmentation. In contrast, Ajodani (2002: 226–238) identifies the pragmatic and radical nationalism prevalent amongst the poets in the Constitutional era, ranging from the pure Persianism of Aref and Eshghi against both Islam and the Christian West to the pragmatic nationalism of Adeeb, Bahar, or Ashraf via resorting to the Islamic and pre-Islamic heritage (Ajodani 2002: 248) to entice people to coalesce around the sense of nationhood against the occidental despotism of the colonial powers. For modernists 'people of Iran' was to be made to act as agents of their destiny through being recipient of techno-scientific rationality and through being transformed into a modern nation-state with constitutional government. Akhundzadeh, Malkam Khan, and Taqizadeh belonged to this category of nationalism where Akhundzadeh mixed his modernism with a carefully tailored dose of Persianism while Malkam mixed it with an equally carefully tailored dose of Islam, and Taqizadeh mixed it with a careful selection of Persianism (see Adamiyat 1970; Vaziri 1993; Kashani-Sabet 1999; Tavakoli-Targhi 2001; Ajodani 2003; Marashi 2008; Ansari 2012; Zia-Ebrahimi 2016; Litvak 2017; Adib-Moghaddam 2018).

Even Nasir-al-Din Shah himself, as Amanat (1997: 300) reports, felt the need to resort to the Shia Islam to fortify the sense of nationhood in the face of relentless interventions from the world powers. For people like Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri, nationhood was primarily and predominantly defined in terms of unshakable affiliations to the Shia Islam and its juris-

prudence, and as such his defence of Iran was due to its people's devotional adherence to the Shia Islam, and consequently Iran per se appeared to have no intrinsic value for him (see Arjomand 1984: 200–202; Shimamoto 1987; Martin 2013).

It can be noted that the site of constructing a sense of nationhood was a prism where Iranians could not come to agree on how to reconcile their irreconcilable differences on how to combine their three regimes of truth. The common belief system required for the emergence of informal norms and formal laws alongside the required enforcement mechanism could not emerge in such a context of irreconcilable differences and ensuing conflicts.

Institutional Failure in the ONM Era

In this era institutions and policies, in the word of Davar—one of the architects of modern legal systems in Iran (Mohammadi 2008)—were "dying young (*javanmarg shodan*)" (Abadian 2009b: 34). The womb of Iranian *dasein* miscarries any programme, any form of life, or any institutions at any colour, which is not blessed with the tri-polar form of legitimacy. In this section we briefly delve into the example of the institutions associated with the notions of vice and virtue.

Institutional Failure in the Realm of Vice and Virtue

The ONM era witnessed a fierce battle over the site of virtue and vice. The encounter with modernity was not an encounter with an embedded entity; it was an encounter with a piece of the real. As such the Iranian embedded womb was not ready to receive the seeds of modernity. It surely wanted something from modernity, for example, its constitutionalism and rule of law which for the Iranian *dasein* echoed constraining man's arbitrariness (slavery to whims) through God's rules and as such could relate to it and try to appropriate it as the religious constitutionalists tried to do, but they could hardly find resonance for modernity's reverse value system. No human order beforehand defended and praised and worshiped the pleasures of the flesh so officially and openly, so wholeheartedly, and so unashamedly (Wilson 2008: 268; Cameron 2002). Modernity for the Western *dasein* was a liberation movement freeing mankind from the shackles of oppressive kingdom of divine and served as a form of democratization of pleasures of the flesh. In this West-based contingent instantia-

tion of modernity, life is nothing but the pursuit of self-interest and pleasure of the flesh, where, as Foucault (1977: 30) phrased it, "the soul is the prison of the body" (see also Foucault 1978; Davidson 2001; Holmes 2010).

That gradual and arduous experience and that long escape to freedom from the tyranny of the soul in the West were not replicated in the experience of the Iranian *dasein*. The encounter with modernity was through military and cultural invasion, material and economic interventions and the manifold acts of social engineering. As such modernity in its permissive value system was a totally misplaced and largely alien entity for the Iranian *dasein*. It is obvious that Iranians were immersed in the pleasures of the flesh throughout their history but almost never as a new truth and almost always as sin (although there are traces of it in Khayyam's and Hafez's poetry; see also Kamaly 2018). The shocking encounter with the new truth about the vice and the virtue led to the operation of addition and subtraction on the three sets of regimes of truths. Iranian *dasein* wanted modernity in its science and technology and maybe in its constitutionalism without its permissive value system. They wanted the West of days and not the West of nights. People like Taqizadeh (see Katouzian 2013; Ansari 2012) frequently condemned what they called as pseudo-modernism of the Iranian society, in its immersion in what they deemed as superficial and immoral aspects of modernity. In a sense they wanted freedom without freedom, good freedom without bad freedom. The drive for progress entailed the desire for Islam without superstition and religious despotism and intolerance, and Persianism without its oriental despotism and poetic irrationalism. In a sense they wanted modernity without modernity, Islam without Islam, and Persianism without Persianism (without their politics of ordinary). They wanted to travel 'with modernity against modernity', 'with Islam against Islam', and 'with Persianism against Persianism', alongside critically applying the white books of each against the black book of the other.

Exploration of various discursive and non-discursive practices in this era clearly demonstrates that in this realm the religious discourses of Shia jurisprudence had monopolized the supply of truths about the nature of relation between man and alcohol, for instance (see Rahnema 2005; Shoukat 2006). In the market for discourses about the social vices, the Islamic discursive formation was the incumbent one, setting the agenda for debates and public policies in contrast to the issues relevant to the

establishment of parliamentary democracy where modernity was the incumbent regime of truth and was setting the agenda and the rival regimes of truth had to challenge, adhere, or modify the incumbent positions to find a niche for themselves in the market.

This in turn demonstrates how the traditional division between secular and religious categories does not strictly apply to the people in the state of belated inbetweenness, as they have nomadic identities and float between boundaries of regimes of truth. Ayatollah Kashani, a top religious and political leader in this era, for instance, activates the discourses of constitutionalism and rule of law, and secular deputies and secular government ministers use the religious language on viciousness of alcohol (Rahnema 2005; Shoukat 2006); the people and their elites are multi-lingual in the state of belated inbetweenness where, depending on the context of situation, they may shift from speaking in the language of religion to the language and vocabularies of modernity or the language of Persian poetry or Persian rituals and civilization or Persian mythology (see Afkhami 2009: 54–57, for instance).

This is also a great example of how the Foucauldian chain of statements, discourses, discursive formations, archives, and epistemes works in practice. Even those who were monarchist, like Farrokh (Rahnema 2005: 483), had to disguise or reformulate their opposition to the bill banning alcohol in the name of its unintended adverse effects on the level of religiosity of people (this is the level of discursive formation). He could not say that the promotion of people's religiosity should not be the purpose of public policy or claim that the right to drink alcohol at a moderate scale is the right of every rational Iranian citizen. In this context, the discursive formation demanded the total adherence to God's commandment in the Quran on the banning of alcohol in the Islamic society (as mentioned in the Ayatollah Shariatmadari's letter to the *Majlis* deputies demanding the banning of alcohol in this era, Shoukat 2006: 309).

The demand for banning social vices far outweighed the single issue of banning alcoholic drinks. Fadaiyan Islam (Jafarian 2007: 217–218) and Kashani (Rahnema 2005: 141, 467, 285) had a long list of social vices including prostitution, dance clubs, gambling houses, women working in public offices, abortion, drug consumption, non-religious education, broadcasting music from the national radio, and many more. Mosaddegh, for instance, was forced to abolish music from the radio in the month of Ramadan due to the incessant pressures from various corners (Rahnema

2005: 481). Even Kasravi (1946) (a famous rationalist nationalist historian and supporter of Reza Shah's modernization projects) severely criticized the blind adoption of the Western mode of free intermixing of the sexes in the name of girls being exploited by the devious men who only had one thing in mind in their relationship with women. The constant unease with social vices and the difficulty in finding viable and stable ways of coping with them created constant fluctuations between the positions of banning and toleration, which in turn gave rise to dysfunctional sets of institutions in charge of handling the issue of social vices. Here Iranians could not handle *The Tyranny of the Moderns* (Urbinati 2015; see also Juergensmeye 2016, Shapiro 2001) one way or another.

The theme of social vices and their prevalence always created waves of discontent with the nature of the social order and created attempts to recast the system. The issue of social vices and social freedom (which opposes spiritual freedom from slavery to animalistic desires; see Dinani 2010; Guillebaud 1999) has been one of the great fault-lines in the history of Iran and a cause for the de-legitimization of any form of socio-political order. There is always either too much or too little amount of social freedom regarding sexual freedom, alcoholic drinks, gambling, and music, literature, art, and cinema and never in the right dose. Who decides what is vice and what constitutes virtue and in what doses are matters of irreconcilable differences between and within multitude of cultural tribes. Public opinion wildly fluctuates between banning social vices and liberal permissiveness. When banning goes too far—and everyone's notion and experience of 'too far' is different from anyone else's—they go for permissiveness, and when permissiveness goes too far, the pendulum turns towards banning. The outcome was the dysfunctional institutions regarding virtues and vices.

Institutional Failure in the Islamic Republic Era

In this era the process of institutional design was frequently aborted, reversed, halted, or informally ignored. In this era, we witness the widespread proliferation of parallel institutions in the realms of military forces, education, economy, foreign policy, security as well as emergence of irreconcilable differences over the writing and implementation of the constitution. Here we only briefly address the case of the institutions of the nation-state.

The Nation-State

In the modern era, the notion of nationhood is institutionalized through a set of ingredients including territorial integrity, a centralized state monopolizing the use of coercion, foundation myth (the myth of common origin), national flags, national anthem, national language, national calendar and national holidays, national sports teams, a national metric system, and a national currency, among others (see Smith 1999, 2003). Due to the contingencies of time and place, the issue of veiling/unveiling was added to this long list in Iran. In this pre- and post-revolutionary period, there have been waves of conflict over the semiotics of nationhood spanning from flags to national holidays, national language, and calendars and veiling to violent strife over the nature of the state itself. Here we briefly explore the examples of veiling and calendar institutionalizing the sense of nationhood, alongside a brief review of the nature of the state.

Due to its contingent emergence from Christendom, modernity turned national identity into "the" salient marker of each and every social assemblage to the extent that nationlessness became almost impossible. Essentially, the political unit organizing the life of people evolved from empires and city-states into nation-states. In effect, for building a nation, as a modern house of being, you need a territory, a state, a language, a flag, a national anthem, a calendar, national holidays, a metric system, a currency, and national sports teams. The belated societies, unlike the pioneering ones, could not sleepwalk into them in a gradual evolutionary process; instead, they were compelled to design them through the process of reverse social engineering. The chronic conflict arises over how and based on which materials each element of the modern house of being should and could be built. Modernity created a demand for the creation of nations, but the supply side needed to largely rely on pre-modern sources as well as modernity itself (see Smith 2003; Anderson 1983/2006; Armstrong 1982, among others).

For Ayatollah Khomeini, for instance, the affiliation to the pre-Islamic Iran (Persianist nationalism of the Shah) or a secular Iran (modernist nationalism of Bazargan, Mosaddegh or Taqizadeh) was largely a sign of return to the age of paganism and ignorance (Rubin 2002: 118; Taheri 2010: 54–56). For him the salient character of the Iranian people was their unconditional affinity, devotion, and affection for the Shia Islam and its saints, as manifested in their passionate affiliations to the religious shrines, rituals of Hajj, Ashura/Muharram and Ramadan, or Islamic

names, among others. As attested by Chehabi (1990: 55; see also Ganji 2011: 239), Bazargan famously referred to this difference in emphasis and order of priority between his position and Ayatollah Khomeini's one by saying that "we want Islam for Iran while Ayatollah Khomeini wants Iran for Islam" (*see* also Dabashi 1993; Jahanbakhsh 2001). The Shah, Khomeini, and Bazargan differed in their preference orderings and their final destinations (their utopias); what Bazargan wanted to arrive at was Paris, London, or New York with special flavours of Islam (especially on how to live an ethical and disciplined life and in detoxicating modernity from its ontological nihilism) and Persianism (especially the heritage of Persian poetry as a repertoire of wisdom about how to live a moral life) (see Dabashi 1993: 330). For him the source of law was modern human rights and the liberal constitution and national democratic *Majlis* (alongside modern science and technology), and Islam and Persianism were used to complement modernity's vacuum in morality and spirituality (which itself required monotheistic ontology). In a sense, he wanted to graft Islam minus jurisprudence (which was largely perceived as religious despotism) and Persianism minus oriental despotism to the Western modernity minus its colonialism, its permissive morality, and its nihilistic metaphysical ontology (here we see the operation of addition and subtraction at work on the three sets of truth bundles at the level of the Heideggerian fourfold).

Where the Shah wanted to arrive at was the gates of Great Sassanid and Achaemenid kingdoms and used modernity selectively to realize his dream of "march towards the gates of great civilization", while Islam was largely and inherently perceived as an obstacle unless and until the threat of non-orthodox modernity (communism) became too serious (Milani 2011; Abrahamian 1982), where Islam was promoted instrumentally as a shield and as an effective firewall to fend off communism (this shows how pragmatically Islam was necessary for the survival of the monarchy and its dreams). Islam and the conservative clergy were instrumental in the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty in the first place as well since they resisted Reza Khan's attempts to found an Ataturk-style republic (see Katouzian 2004).

Ayatollah Khomeini was driven by the compound state of belated inbetweenness to use modernity and Persianism strategically to produce the dream of discursive home of spiritual Shia Islam. In this sense, 'each voice was composed of the traces of all three regimes of truth but with different orders of priority and distinct architecture'. The belated tri-polarity of

Iranian embeddedness compelled each voice to possess a tri-polar structure with different order of priority. The traces of three regimes of truth in Bazargan's works, for example, can be found in the following quote from Chehabi (1990: 78) where Bazargan's eclecticism is evident in the economy of referencing in his book *Rah-e Tey Shodeh* (*The Path Travelled*), indicative of state of belated inbetweenness:

> For his historical data Bazargan cites such diverse sources as the Quran, the Belgian symbolist poet Maurice Maeterlinck's book le Grand Secret, and one Major Owrang's opus Yekta-parasti dar Iran-e bastan. (Monotheism in the ancient Iran)

Here we see multiple forms of legitimacies, rationalities, and vocabularies operating in Bazargan's work. Bazargan's voice with its distinct architecture, as a truth supplier, attempts to offer a synthesis of multiple regimes of truth by referring to Islamic source of truth (the Quran) alongside the modern regime of truth (the Western sources), and Persian regime of truth (sources from the ancient Persian house of wisdom).

In Khomeini's project of Islamic nationalism, the Iranian people were praised only so far as they showed their good taste by unconditional embracement of (Shia) Islam and by prioritizing it over everything else. For instance, in 1981, Khomeini, declared (Gharaviyan 2012; see also Banisadr 1981)

> The President has to travel in the path of Islam; if he opts to move against Islam and the whole nation support him, I would single-handedly stand up to them.

In Khomeini's voice, the unconditional prioritization of will to modernization was the sign of selection of paganism and ignorance, equivalent to Sen's (1982) notion of "rational fools", over the eternal happiness promised by the Islamic faith. The revolutionary slogan of 'neither the East nor the West' (*na sharghi na gharbi*) summarized the policy of non-reliance on any form of modernity—whether communism or capitalism—as the main overriding component of the project of 'nationalizing Iran'.

The guiding principle in the project of Islamization is, hence, the dominance of Islam in the definition of nationhood. Some elements of modernity and Persianism could be synchronized with Islam and assimilated under its discursive and non-discursive integrity and appellation as much

possible, and when conflicts arise, the elements perceived to be in opposition to the content and form of Islam are tinkered with or sacrificed. This model would allow large amount of pragmatism to be shown locally where the Islamic components could also be sacrificed for the incorporation of modern or Persianist elements.

One of the prominent examples of Khomeini giving prominence to the modern and Persianist sides of the equation over the Islamic side is in the case of Jalaladdin Farsi (Moin 1999: 233) who was selected to be the candidate of the Islamic Republican Party (IRP) against Banisadr in the first post-revolutionary presidential election. Khomeini "disqualified one of his staunch supporters [Farsi] from entering the 1980 presidential elections on the grounds that his father had been born in Afghanistan" (Abrahamian 1993: 15).

Khomeini vetoed Farsi' nomination because of his questionable nationality; this deprived IRP from a strong candidate (Hashemi Rafsanjani 2011) and changed the history of the Islamic Republic in a drastic fashion. In this case, Khomeini opted to give precedence to the modern and Persianist dimension over the Islamic one (Farsi's father was part of the Islamic international community, *ummah*).

Khomeini deemed granting such concessions to the modern and Persianist dimensions of nationhood not to be detrimental to the survival of the Islamic nature of the whole system and as such sanctioned the occasional local dominance of the other two dimensions over the Islamic one. But in hindsight, this choice had a butterfly effect on the fate of the system, as the collision between IRP and President Banisadr plunged the Islamic Republic into its first huge internal conflict just two years after its birth in the form of Banisadr's impeachment and eventual dismissal. Before vetoing Farsi's candidacy, Khomeini had vetoed Ayatollah Beheshti's candidacy due to his clerical profession and Khomeini, at that stage, wanting for the executive posts to be free from the clergy (Banisadr 1981: 255; Brumberg 1997: 50; Hashemi Rafsanjani 2011). It was likely that had Farsi's candidacy been approved by Khomeini overriding the terms of the new constitution, using his power of issuing fatwa, the IRP machine would have worked for Farsi to be elected as the first president rather than Banisadr and the Islamic Republic would have been likely to avoid having its first devastating crisis, namely, the impeachment of its first president (Ehteshami 1995: 12; Mohajerinejad 2010: 123).

The ambiguity and confusion over Islamic nationalism and Islamic internationalism or pan-Islamism and how they would interact with

Persianist and modernist forms of nationalism and internationalism was one of the conditions of possibility of the Iran-Iraq war. After the revolution, Khomeini's coalition insisted on his identity as a religious leader of the Shia and Islamic international community when they invited the Iraqi Shia people to rebel against Saddam's regime, ignoring his identity as the formal leader of the post-revolutionary nation (Pollack 2004: 184; Montazeri 2001: 438, vol. 1).

Veiling as the Flag of the Nation

The case of veiling and unveiling was another source of constant contentions in the process of construction of the Iranian sense and institutions of nationhood. For Khomeini's coalition, the legalized use of veiling in public space (the institution of veiling) served as a "commitment device" (Frank 2001: 57; Acemoglu and Robinson 2006: 177) like wearing a ring in a marriage and was the sign that Iran was permanently wedded to Islam in rejection of other possible suitors. It can therefore be argued that veiling effectively served as the national flag in the post-revolutionary era (Sedghi 2007: 210). Because of the Islamization project, large sacrifices were made in terms of lost economic growth due to lack of foreign direct investment, inflow of capital, and brain drain and capital flight of the Iranians who were objecting to, among others, the forced public veiling law (Amid and Amjad 2005: 89, 188; Carrington and Detragiache 1998). As Gordon et al. (2008: 162) maintain, "The fact that Iran also experiences a significant brain drain of educated professionals is both a symptom and cause of the nation's difficulties."

For the project of Islamic nationalism, this sacrifice was worthwhile in order to preserve the Islamic identity of the nation. Legalizing veiling was an act of defiance against the decadence and immorality of the Western modernity with its over-sexualization of public life and its celebration of impermanence of the body (Crooke 2009). Resistance towards veiling (Afary 2009; Cronin 2014) was an act of defiance (Khosravi 2008, 2017) against the Islamic order with its over-spiritualization of public life and celebration of the permanence of the soul through its jurisprudential formalism. One was resisting the panoptical gaze of the West and the other 'panoptical gaze of the ayatollah and his authoritarian God' (Afary 2009: 268). There were multiple levels of multilateral forms of defiance, resistance, and misunderstanding at work here.

The emergence of veiling as the flag of Islamic nationalism in the Khomeini's project of nationalizing Iran needs to be contextualized in the wider history of Iran. In effect, it is the mirror image of the emergence of unveiling as the flag of Persianist nationalism in the Pahlavi' project of nationalization (Najmabadi 2005: 150; Katouzian 2004: 34), itself a reaction to the humiliations and dysfunctionalities of the Qajar and the Constitutional eras. The imposition of veiling in the Islamic Republic led to the emergence of a guerrilla war between some women and the morality police and the emergence of the phenomenon of bad veiling or malveiling (*bad-hejabi*) (Sedghi 2007: 211; Kusha 2002: 249–250; Moaveni 2005), leading to the emergence of the dysfunctional institution of veiling, which can be treated as a symbol of all forms of dysfunctionalities and deformities resulting from the act of reverse social engineering. As a result, the zombies of Westernization and Persianization have returned through "politics of resistance" (Holliday 2011: 155) to haunt the Islamic Republic the way the zombie of Islamism had returned to haunt the Shah's Persianist order (Crooke 2009). As both veiling and unveiling were the outcomes of reverse social engineering, lacking adequate and irreversible level of emergent legitimacy and consensus, their corresponding institutionalized forms of Islamic and Persianist nationalism were plagued by debilitating forms of deformities and dysfunctionalities.

Katouzian (2010: 219–220) maintains that Reza Shah's decree in 1936 on compulsory unveiling of women "was tantamount to a decree in Europe at that time that would have forced women to go topless in public". Katouzian's observation is confirmed by an eyewitness, Nesta Ramazani (2002: 2), in the following terms:

> Suddenly women were faced with having to go out in public unveiled. There were few options: either go out feeling "naked" or stay at home.[6]

[6] The move from *Qanat* (networks of underground channels collecting, preserving and controlling water for consumption and agriculture) as a traditional method of controlling water and irrigation emerged through an evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization to building modern dams is another example of social engineering without vanishing mediators with catastrophic consequences. As Latour (1987, cited in Luckhurst 2008: 24) maintains, "To describe a machine … is not just a technical matter: it is also to describe the social relations that are bound into it." In the context of belated inbetweenness, the whole of social life is littered with examples of projects of reverse social engineering (see Ostrom and Basurto 2011: 321, on the unintended consequences of the social engineering of irrigation systems).

The point is that women 'can' end up going topless in public, but such an outcome needs a series of vanishing mediators and piecemeal tinkering (like no-pants day; and a series of incremental changes or seven 'stages of maturation'), emerging and disappearing in an evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization where the society comes to inspect various dimensions of novel way of being, seeing, and living and comes to own a way of life and normalize it and practise it freely and out of their own free will via discursive and non-discursive practices. Mosaddegh's nationalization of oil was another case of the project of reverse social engineering like Reza Shah's compulsory unveiling, both without going through the painstaking and patient process of capacity and consensus building. These social engineers frequently take the sudden and transitory but rootless eruption of enthusiasm amongst the population for their projects as a sign of deep and unwavering support for their projects with catastrophic consequences.

Time and Calendar

As another dimension of the formation of the modern nation-state, the calendar attains immense prominence for the Iranian *dasein* as it signifies the qualitative periodization of time; time is defined in terms of before and after a significant event acting as a turning point in the life of the nation. Calendars imply the non-linear shift in the meaning and significance of time, enshrined in the collective memory and collective emotional economy and affective investment. As such, the institution of calendar (with the three options of Western calendar, Islamic calendar, and Persian calendar with their internal and external permutations) (Moaddel 1993: 63) faces significant level of deformities and dysfunctionalities (just like the institution of veiling) due to being torn between alternative regimes of truth and their associated affirmative and negating facets, their dark and white books, their radicalism and pragmatism, and their politics of ordinary and politics of piety. In reaction to the Shah's action in changing the Islamic calendar into a Persianist one in 1976, Khomeini, as reported in Riesebrodt (1998: 129; see also Rothenberg 2011; Dabashi 2010: 206–207), stressed on the significance of the institution of calendar in the following terms:

> He [the Shah] is against the Islamic calendar. To be against the Islamic calendar is to be against Islam itself; in fact the worst thing that this man has done during his reign is to change the calendar.

The adoption of migration of Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD as the base of the Islamic calendar attunes the nation with the eternal time of emancipative rationality, liberating them from the terror of death, while Persianist calendar puts the nation in contact with its imagined birth in the pre-Islamic era of great kings, grand empires, and magnanimous civilizations in accordance with the communicative rationality, liberating the Iranian *dasein* from the despotism of chaos and anarchy. The adoption of Western calendar signifies the participation of the nation in the global economy and in the greatest festival of wealth creation in line with instrumental rationality, liberating the Iranian *dasein* from the despotism of nature, underdevelopment, and poverty.

One example of the intense investment made in the nature of calendar is the case of Ayatollah Montazeri (2001: 421, vol. 1) in his encounter with Heykal, the famous Egyptian journalist. In a conversation with Heykald during Heykal's visit of Ayatollah Khomeini in Paris in 1978, Montazeri condemned some Arab countries for their adoption of Christian calendar and Sundays as weekends and strongly recommended the adoption of Islamic calendar, and the revival of Islamic history and the adoption of Fridays as weekends. This sense of unhappiness should be contrasted with Reza Shah's legalizing the Persian solar calendar in 1925 while keeping the base of the calculation—the migration of Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD—intact, which was embraced by the nation and functioned as a stable institution. As such, the two Pahlavis, the father and the son, both changed the calendar, one worked, and another served as one of the triggers of the 1979 Islamic revolution. In effect, Reza Shah kept the Islamic nature of the calendar and combined it with the Persian solar calculations and Persian names, while Mohammad Reza Shah totally Persianized it by using the supposed year of accession of the first Achaemenid king, Cyrus the Great (559 BC), as the base of the calculation. As such in 1976, the Persian-Islamic (*Shamsi-Hejri*) year of 1355 was turned into the *Shahanshahi* (imperial or monarchic) year of 2535 (see Abdollahy 1990; Stanizai 2015).

In these diverse narratives of foundation myth, the adoption of each calendar has its own set of denotations and connotations, which makes the creation of balance and synchronization between the three forms of rationalities a hard task to achieve due to their being packaged in three distinctive regimes of truth with distinct discursive and non-discursive practices and distinctive emotional economies and appellations. Once again, we see the Chakrabarty's notion of timeknot at work in this period of the Iranian

modern history. The issue is how to override and overcome the default position of incommensurability associated with alternative regimes of truth with the de facto incompatible linguistic and non-linguistic traditions. The tragedy of confusion regarding the three regimes of truth leads to the tragedy of successive experience of failures in the rival projects of institutionalization of 'nationalizing Iran'.

Formation of Modern State

Effectively, in the modern constellation of social order in the community of nations, the state acts as the nation's consciousness. Without a functional consciousness, the nation-state is dubbed as a failed state, equivalent to being psychotic at an individual level. In this period, we yet again encounter at least three large projects of formation of modern state in the shape of modernist state, Persianist state, and Islamic state, with many shades of grey in-between. Here we briefly explore the Shah's and Khomeini's models of formation of the modern state.

The Shah wanted to insure his system against the threat and risk of collapse by giving each and every class of people from the peasants, to women and workers, to professional middle classes a stake in the new Persianized order (Garthwaite 2005: 248–249). His policies involved expansion of secular and Persianized education, health, industry and commerce, arts, sports and entertainment alongside attempts to "nationalize religion" (Liu 2000: 124), in effect, trying to sanitize the religion in the service of the state. Selective permissions granted for the expansion of favourable religious organizations and activities (Mirsepassi 2004: 233) were meant to immunize Iran against communism and to make radical political Islam and 'black reactionaries' obsolete. Effectively he wanted to Persianize Islam. This programme, which was increasingly funded by the oil revenue as its main economic wing, was complemented by expansion and modernization of bureaucracy and the security apparatus (legal system, army, police, and intelligent service) and by establishing strategic alliances with the West and specially America. This foreign alliance was increasingly and gradually expanded to the Soviet bloc as well in a foreign policy based on the principle of positive balance (*movazeneh-ye mosbat*).

These were rhizomatic movements to incorporate the selective elements of all the three regimes of truth to achieve his project of Persianization of the state. As such, the lack of tri-polar form of credibility and legitimacy for the Shah's grand project was not because of its components but

because of the abruptness of their introduction to the society (it was not 'our' project), and their quilting point and their master signifier. The Shah and his coalition could not theoretically and philosophically justify his brand of socialist monarchy, or Islamic monarchy (*saltanat-e Islami*), all mixed in a cocktail containing alliances with the capitalist West and imperialist America. That is why the Shah, seemingly bizarrely, asked for his *Rastakhiz* Party in 1975 to be theoretically founded on dialectics (Milani 2011: 383). Any rhizomatic movement requires adequate level of symbolization and harmonization through an evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization to be able to be presentable as a legitimate package of truth. Rhizomatic, eclectic, and hybrid combinations can live at the unconscious level of the popular culture (see Naficy 1993: 22; Willis 1990), but for inhabiting the conscious space of state and public policy, for example, they need theoretical sublimation.

All of these multiple forms of crisis of legitimacy within and without Persianism and their associated forms of perceived bastardities and monstrosities (*lakkategi*), where even the Shah's prime minister Hoveida did not believe in the *Rastakhiz* Party (Milani 2011: 382), were bound to lead to "more paralysis" and culminate in the emergence of armed and non-armed oppositions, which in turn generated the sense of 'being under siege' and prompted the generation of rampant levels of mistrust (Milani 2011: 149, 372, 440), suspicion, and conspiracy theory in the Shah's system (Milani 2011: 132, 409) and transformed it into a police state with the dominance of Savak, further exacerbating the legitimacy of the whole project of Persianization of the state. Iran was once again turned into a site of "innocent cruelty" (Talebi 2011: 150) from all sides against all sides in the form of epistemic violence, responded by or complemented with physical violence, all leading to making the Shah's corporate and rentier state (Skocpol 1982) increasingly dysfunctional, culminating in its eventual "abortion" (Milani 2011: 338) through the butterfly effects of small events, bifurcating into larger ones.

Khomeini's theory of absolute authority of the Islamic jurist (*velayat-e motlagheh-ye faqih*) was a bricolage (*sar-e ham bandi*), an improvised outcome, and went through at least five stages of trials and errors, as Banisadr (1981, 2011) attests. It was the evolutionary reincarnation of the expression of the need for the final arbiter (Iranian modern leviathan, Vali Nasr 2001) in the confused state of belated inbetweenness where all social assemblages (society, organizations, groups, and individuals) are torn between alternative regimes of truth and are unable to arrive at a consen-

sual and synchronized hybrid to function as the condition of possibility for the emergence of a shared mechanism of conflict resolution, founding an order based on 'unity without uniformity' and 'agree to disagree'. Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi (2011), one of the staunch supporters of the theory of *velayat-e faqih*, admitted bitterly that almost nobody at the highest level of authority inside the system believes in the theory of *velayat-e faqih*, ironically replicating the experience of Hoveida who did not believe in the Shah's *Rastakhiz* Party. Iran's state of belated inbetweenness paradoxically necessitates the emergence of various forms of final arbiters and undermines them at the same time, culminating in the creation of various forms of dysfunctional states.

Conclusion

This chapter begins by introducing the main institutional dilemma for the belated societies. The belated societies have been put in a 'do or die' situation; the implicit or explicit maxim has been 'transform your societies through copying from the pioneering societies or get destroyed by various military, economic or cultural forces of modernity'. The pioneering societies have historically benefited from the first-mover advantage and could evolve at their own pace without any interference or imposition from monstrous outside forces. If the belated societies want to enjoy from the second-mover advantage and copy the modern institutions, they need social cohesion which does not exist in the state of belated inbetweenness in the troubled societies. That is the paradox of institutional design in the state of belated inbetweenness. The insights from the game theory were used to theorize the emergence of stable institutions or lack of it. They explore the issues of how the components of functional institutions cannot emerge in the troubled societies due to the inconsistencies, incompletenesses, and undecidabilities associated with the state of belated inbetweenness. It was also shown that due to the work of embedded forces, Iran cannot die or become a failed state like Somalia, and it cannot copy from the pioneering countries successfully, and as such it is plunged into two centuries of turmoil and lingers along in a perpetual state of deformity and dysfunctionality. Various examples were provided to demonstrate the rare cases of institutional successes alongside a sea of institutional failures in different eras of the Iranian modern history.

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CHAPTER 7

Chaotic Order

Introduction: The Atomic Nature of Power

This chapter explores how the three stages of tragedy of confusion, formation of unstable coalitions, and institutional failures inevitably tend to lead to the emergence of a chaotic order in the last 200 years of the Iranian modern history. Chaos almost invariably follows confusion. The experience of discontent and disillusionment emanating from living within dysfunctional and deformed institutions (reminiscent of Ibrahim Beig's 'disturbance evaluation') endemic to the interplay between the state of inbetweenness and the state of belatedness culminates in the emergence of large and small social movements and revolutions leading to the collapse of the old order. The collapse of the incumbent regime of truth with its associated project and subprojects of social transformation and its affiliated shades of voices leads to the emergence of a spring of freedom where all the marginalized regimes of truth and their associated projects/subprojects and voices erupt into the social space, producing multitude of groups, societies, and associations. The irreconcilable differences between and within alternative forces, voices, and faces culminate in the emergence of state of chaotic civil strife where the social order converges to the state of total disorder and collapse. The sweet taste of freedom turns into the bitter experiences of quasi civil war, anarchy, and chaos, which calls for the emergence of new saviour and new final arbiter (Iranian leviathan) (see Katouzian 2004: 18; 2010: 5, on the fluctuation between the politics of chaos and politics of stability in the history of Iran). This turbulent spiral

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process is best captured by Mirza Malkam Khan's (1891: 239–240) observation in his London speech:

> each reform movement ends in revolution, each revolution ends in blood; and after the storm, the waters subside into the same sluggish calm, and there is just as little security of life and property, as little justice and freedom as before.

The wars of attrition between alternative regimes of truth and their associated cultural tribes result in the production of limit-experiences of degeneration and collapse, where Iran verges towards and touches upon the symptoms of failed states. But frequently the process of degeneration does not end in the collapse of the whole order as the same forces plotting its state of near-collapse coalesce to save the country from the brink of total breakdown. Compactness of the social space produces two contradictory effects of factionalism in normal times and unity at times of extreme crises. Depending on the nature of the old order, it is expected that a new final arbiter would emerge to put an end to the state of civil strife and act as a coping strategy for conflict resolution. The final arbiter (Iranian leviathan re-emerging time and again in different disguises) resorts to the repressive strategies in the name of Islam, Iran, or modernity or a particular combination of all three to eliminate the rival forces, voices, and faces from the social order and to establish itself as the new incumbent force and to restore a semblance of order to the socio-political life of the nation.

The new marginalized forces, voices, and faces lie dormant in the short euphoric honeymoon period of the new incumbent regime, but soon they come back with vengeance and start a new round of wars of attrition with its incessant waves of de-legitimization and discrediting, severely eroding the legitimacy, credibility, and popularity of the new incumbent regimes, ultimately making them incompetent in establishing functional institutions, which culminates in its collapse and the same truth cycle (similar to business cycles in economics) recommences, whereby the population migrate (exit) in mass to the new regime of truth by voting with their hands or feet (see Fleck and Andrew Hanssen 2013; Hirschman 1970). The ease at which Iranians can change sides and freely enter and exit the alternative regimes of truth is mind-blowing. The existence of such alternative set of options is at the root of such a state of chaotic order and is endemic to the state of belated inbetweenness. Naturally, in the state of belated inbetweenness, there is no irreversible commitment to a particular

regime of truth and its associated projects and subprojects of reverse social engineering. The minute you are unhappy with a particular configuration of state of affairs, you have the option of moving to alternative regimes of truth. Sudden jumps, rather than evolutionary processes of chaotic synchronization, are the dominant method of social change.

Iranian Governmentalities: An Army of Leviathans Alongside an Army of Defiant Actors

It is a fact that in 'troubled societies' like Iran, trapped in the compound state of belated inbetweenness, the social order relies on a scattered army of final arbiters to regenerate order, and as a result the power appears to be arbitrary, capricious, discretionary (*saligheh-yee*), and atomic. The phenomenon of discretionary nature of power (*ha'kemee'yat-e saligheh*) is equivalent to what Katouzian (1998) terms as "licence" and opposes it to liberty. For him liberty is rule-based and always operates within consensual constraints while licence is willy-nilly and arbitrary. Alternatively, Katouzian (2010: 16–18) calls it "deep-seated personalism" of the Iranian society. It is worth noting that what appears as exercise of "licence" or "personalism" may be an exercise of a particular combination of regimes of truth, which for the outsiders appears as idiosyncratic, arbitrary, and discretionary. Final arbiters are produced by the Iranian embeddedness and are bound to act within the limits of their embedded thrownness, namely, the Shah within the hybrid bounds of the regime of truth of Persian monarchy, Mosaddegh within the hybrid bounds of the constitutional modernity, and Ayatollah Khomeini within the hybrid bounds of the Shia Islam. The duality of licence/liberty or personalism/rule of law seems to be a case of counter-transference and another application of hermeneutics of suspicion without hermeneutics of understanding.

Even the social actors themselves frequently commit the same cardinal sin of transference and classify the positions of others as the cases of rule of discretion (*saligheh-yee*) while categorizing their own positions as principled and disciplined. Each face is characterized by the particularity of its inhabiting voice and its internal preference ordering with its general and particular components (the notion of preference orderings was used in Rahnema 2005: 475, and in page 528 of the same reference via the notion of the difference in taste or *ekhtelaf-e saligheh*, which is the code for difference in the general and particular components of the preference

structure and their orderings). In the state of belated inbetweenness, as Dabashi (2010: 208) puts it, “the *multiple consciousness* … can *ipso facto* challenge any mode of governmentality.” This is true except for the fact that these are largely multiple forms of “unthought” (Arkoun 2006), “positive unconscious” (Foucault 1970/2005: xi) and “historical a priori” (Foucault 1970/2005: xxiii). In effect, ‘they know not what they are doing, but they do it anyway’. Dabashi (2010: 210) perceptively observes that:

> The creative combination of these planes [systems of truth] offers infinite opportunity to play with and subvert the strategems that a garrison state may wish to deploy and thereby persuade itself that it is unassailable in its fictive fortress.

This unconscious creation of an army of defiant social assemblages blocks any possibility of formation of stable coalitions or institutions.

The state of belated inbetweenness is generative of an authoritarian governmentality constituted by the three forms of unstable spaces of Islam, modernity, and Persianism. Governmentalities of everyday life both in terms of ‘conduct of conduct’ and the rationalities associated with it require the emergence of leviathans in all fields of life, work, and language in schools, hospitals, clubs, friendship and family circles, and the like. The dynamics of the relation between each form of leviathan and manifold forms of resistance to it creates a type of micropolitics (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 239–240) of sensation, resonance, movement, and flow; features that are often unspoken and slip through our normal frameworks of binary oppositions. Each leviathan at any scale is an idiosyncratic outcome of the evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization, out of unique constellation of exposures to the three regimes of truth. Such a singularity appears as arbitrary to other singularities.

As such the deployment of the notion of ‘arbitrariness’ is the tell-tale sign of failure to understand the radical other, for instance, in the portrayal of the Shah in Vali Nasr (2000) or Khomeini in Amuzegar (2014; see also Adib-Moghaddam 2014; Martin 2003). Vali Nasr (2000) sees the Shah as an arbitrary patrimonial ruler who withdraws his support for an expert-based vision of economic development represented in the ministry of economy and its minister, Alikhani (1962–1968). Nasr does not embark on fathoming the predicaments of the Shah’s context and how he sees his system under siege from all sides, manifested in his wider obsessions and

associations with security and his attempts to maximize the number of stakeholders in the survival of his Persianist system. The economic experts in the ministry were blind to such political-economy concerns and were immersed in their own expert tunnel visions and “tyranny of experts” (Easterly 2014) and were blind to wider complex system concerns of the Shah, instinctive to him as part of his tacit, unconscious knowledge (see Limbert 2009: 33 on a list of the Shah’s fears). While the Shah was heavily involved in solving the crisis of legitimacy endemic to each incumbent force in Iran, the experts were engaged in solving crisis of boom and bust in the economy, or the crisis in economic growth, or at best the crisis in development (see Brew 2017, for one example of how these different types of crises were operating on different actors in the Shah’s reign).

The same applies to Amuzegar (2014: 2) and his counter-transference on Khomeini, treating his contradictory positions in Paris and in Tehran as “taqieh—the Shi’ism practice of intentionally falsifying discourse in order to deceive the enemy”. In the state of belated inbetweenness, social actors are under siege from all angles and lack internal consistency or external stability. Essentially, they lack consistent and coherent bee-like unity and identity pertinent to the homogenous or heterogeneous societies. As such, they are not, by in large, deceivers but the “confused voices” (Foucault 1981: 8) having “confused dreams” (Movahhed 1999, 2004) and change their sides, minds, and positions frequently in response to even (apparently) slight changes in the wider socio-political contexts. As a result, they change their minds, sides, positions, and affections (predominantly) honestly in response to changing situations (Javadzadeh 2011). In all likelihood, what Ayatollah Khomeini said and did in Paris was honest as what he said and did in Tehran; this is apparent from when he frequently apologized for his mistakes implicitly or explicitly (see Ganji 2011: 63, 140, 219–221, 233, 417, 524; Brumberg 2001: 98). Almost all rulers of the Iranian modern history have been accused of being deceitful and double-faced or power-thirsty while almost all they said and did was a set of reactions to the highly volatile circumstances associated with the state of belated inbetweenness in order to save their affiliated regime of truth or their ultimate goal of saving Iran from what they perceived to be the risk of its irreversible collapse into a failed nation-state and helping it to achieve its former glory. Reza Shah, for instance, was accused of being ‘quite capable of talking sweet and acting sour’ (Katouzian 2004: 40), the Shah was accused of turning into an absolutist monarch in charge of a rentier and corporate state in his change of mind with regard to the desirability of a

one-party system (Milani 2011; Fatemi 1982), Mosaddegh was accused of turning into a despot (Sahabi 2007), and Khomeini was accused of being deceitful in terms of the monumental gap between what he said and did in Paris and what he said and did in Tehran.

In the state of belatedness, where everyone is turned into a campaigner to save the nation, it is also quite rational and expedient to "hide" your views from others to form fleeting coalitions with strange bedfellows to find practical solutions to urgent problems of the time. This property has little to do with the old Shia practice of *taqieh* (the act of dissimulation of religious belief in order to be safe); *taqieh* was the notion deployed by Keddie (1963) and repeated by Poulson (2006: 55) to make sense of the prevalence of this feature amongst the contemporary Iranians. Alongside the active use of secrecy and silence in the state of belated inbetweenness, it is quite natural to change your mind frequently and convert to alternative truth camps if you find your adopted truth camp and your particular shade of grey and its associated projects and subprojects of reverse social engineering cannot deliver the utopia and the dream of escape from the socio-economic backwardness and/or achieving other ideals.

The case of Iran hostage crisis (Houghton 2001) is a clear example of the atomic nature of power in Iran, where the leader (Khomeini) followed his followers (the Muslim students), demonstrating Khomeini's change of mind and shift in emphasis. Banisadr (1981: 254) summarizes this point by expressing that at the time the critical events were shaped by forces outside the realm of control of the leading nucleus of the revolution. Within the master signifier of Islam, Khomeini was ready to follow his followers in affirming the liberal or revolutionary versions of Islam depending on the preferences expressed by the believers (as he initially affirmed the more liberal draft of the new constitution without the theory of *velayat-e faqih*). Khomeini's subjectivity itself was deeply engulfed in the state of belated inbetweenness, and as such, different voices could activate and awaken different facets of his being, inside the imaginary order of affiliation to Islam. In a sense, the power of voices within Khomeini himself was deeply atomic.

Rafsanjani (2011), for instance, reports how Khomeini's mood and mode of thinking on the nature of music and its legitimacy used to change depending on the character of his last visitors; his position could fluctuate between liberal and conservative stances in no time. This was related to the tight client-provider relations, in the market (demand and supply) for fatwas, between the jurist and the believer, which would make the jurist

responsive to the needs and complaints of the believer within the limits and appellation of the master signifier of Islam (see Cole 2005: 66). However, if the people wanted to change their allegiance to alternative regime of truth, Khomeini would stand up to them to reshape and redirect their subjectivity to the right path or suffer the fate of Sheikh Fazlollah; hence, his famous saying that "if all people say something [in opposing the pillars of Islam] I would single-handedly stand up to them and say something else" (see Banisadr 1981). This kind of standing up to people functions as a tool to activate and awaken their meta-preferences.

We see the frequent and drastic change of positions in almost all other figures and organizations, from individuals like Malkam Khan and Taqizadeh to Mohammad Reza Shah, Mosaddegh, Banisadr, Bazargan, Ali Shariati, Ayatollah Montazeri, Hashemi Rafsanjani, Makhmalbaf, and Ahmadinejad, among others, or in organizations like Fadaiyan Islam, Fadaiyan Khalgh, Mojahedin Khalgh, the Tudeh Party, the Islamic Republic Party, and the Liberation Movement Party, among others. Based on Davidson's principle of charity, the analyst needs to refrain from attributing to them active agency as deceivers and liars in pursuit of power and contextualize their subjectivity and their positions as passive agents of embedded historical forces working in and through them.

The changing positions of the Shah and Khomeini or Mojahedin Khalgh or the Tudeh Party should be understood in relation to the intersection between the context of culture (inbetweenness) and the context of situation (belatedness). As such they are bricolages and have 'to improvise as they go' to protect their favoured regimes of truth and their associated projects and subprojects of social engineering from collapse. The pursuit of power almost never works without the supporting systems of knowledge as Foucault teaches us (Flynn 2005). Due to the lack of stable institutional framework, the Iranian social faces are obliged to act as the final arbiters and define, implement, and impose the rules of the game. They turn themselves into institutions, and "the" one, "the saviour" (*naji*). Hoveida, the Shah's prime minister, for instance, "had become an institution himself" (Azimi 2008: 191). Hoveida himself had repeatedly declared the Shah as the first person of the realm, for whom there was no second (Milani 2000). "The zeal and certitude of a prophet" (Milani 2000: 277; see also Mirsepassi 2010, on prophecy among the intellectuals) demonstrated by various political, ideological, and theoretical entrepreneurs in Iran is the by-product of the pressing need for the final arbiter and the saviour in the state of belated inbetweennes. This compound context acts

as a condition of possibility for the emergence of prophecy in the Iranian social order. The emergence of final arbiters in all walks of life, work, and language in the last 200 years in Iran has almost nothing to do with patrimony, despotism, populism, or *taqieh* or other borrowed concepts and everything to do with the compound state of belated inbetweenness.

The point is that the actions, speeches, and emotions of the radical others are frequently manifested to the self as irrational, delusional, arbitrary, and licentious because of self's addiction to a particular form of rationality and its grid of intelligibility. The discourse of licence and arbitrariness is based on a poorly theorized grasp of social phenomena, human agency, and the particularities of the Iranian historical contexts. Abrahamian (1974) and Keddie (1971), for instance, demonstrate how even the shahs of Qajar who were supposed to be the pinnacles of the oriental despotism and arbitrariness were extremely powerless in terms of access to a strong army and an efficient bureaucracy; instead, their power was rooted in the people and their elites throughout the country believing in the necessity of submission to the power of the Shah as a way of preventing chaos. This set of discursive and non-discursive practices was rooted in the institution of Persian kingship as Shadow of Almighty on the face of the earth and its associated discursive and non-discursive practices (see Katouzian 2010: 4–5; Rajaee 1993; Soudavar 2003; Lambton 1962).

These three regimes of truth shape and restrain all forms of subjectivities and social interactions. For instance, as Amanat (1997) attests, despite having access to as many women as he could wish, Nasir-al-Din Shah had to strictly abide by the Shia rulings of having only four permanent wives and the distinction between permanent wives and temporary wives through promotion to or demotion from the status of being amongst the four permanent wives. This dynamics had produced a particular configuration of harem politics in the Qajar era. This is alongside the fact that Mohammad Reza Shah, almost a century later, could not even have more than one permanent wife at a time due to the penetration of the modern regime of truth in the Iranian lifeworld. As such he had to resort to secret and illicit relations with a stream of women, as Milani (2011), Afkhami (2009), and Alam (1991) report, buying him a bad reputation for being "a notorious womanizer" (Milani 2008: 1061; see also Shawcross 1988: 96). As such, regimes of truth almost always set the parameters of "licence to operate" in all realms of life, work, and language. Hence, this kind of misclassification in seeing the positions of the radical others as arbitrary and spineless, which itself is the product of the state of belated inbetween-

ness, further exacerbates the relentless wars of attrition between and within coalitions and creates a cumulative atmosphere of bitterness, spitefulness, and cold civil war, feeding back into the state of chaotic order.

The nature of diffusion of power in the state of belated inbetweenness is different from the decentralization and federalization of power in the state of harmonized and synchronized embeddedness. In the state of belated inbetweenness, power at each particular context emanates from the contradictory sources of knowledge and competing forms of devotions. In the university context, for example, the modern scientific credentials act as the well of power, which may come into conflict with the power generated from the status and discourses of martyrdom (religious and/or revolutionary credentials) (Varzi 2006; Khosronejad 2013), and they both may come into conflict with the powers emanating from the access to the "Persian house of wisdom" (Polastron 2007: 56; Afkhami 2009: 55). Each person in authority or outside of it is a trajectory of biographically determined idiosyncratic fold of these wells of power/knowledge/subjectivity invested with multiple forms of legitimacy. In each context of situation, different elements of this multi-layered structure of power/knowledge/subjectivity are activated or deactivated.

This makes the exercise of power (management of a university, or the central bank, for instance) look arbitrary and discretionary, while in reality, it depends on the balance of power within a constellation of social actors in any particular context, the trajectory of evolution of each social assemblage and not on their whims or *ex-nihilo* wills, and how they interact with each other, generating a wide range of unintended consequences. In a particular context, say in a small or big city in a branch of a bank or in a school or an army barrack, it is not fully predictable whether the persons in authority or outside of it activate the power dynamics predominantly based on the modern discourses, Islamic discourses, or Persianist discourses and whether their discourses are found to be credible and are bought or not. The unintended consequences of the interaction between the particular constellation of discursive and non-discursive practices at any context of situation determine the nature of that institution or organization at a particular time and place.

Furthermore, what a social assemblage (like the army, a newspaper, a political organization like Mojahedin, or a person like Banisadr) does at time A (like Mojahedin assassinating American army staffs in Tehran in the Shah period) is not a guide or predictor for what he/she/it does at time B (forming coalition with Banisadr, Saddam Hosein, or American neo-

conservatives against the Islamic Republic), as the composition of its hybrid voice may change drastically through conversion to alternative regimes of truth or change slightly but significantly through change in emphases, tones, and temperament and/or in the nature of silences, elisions, and in the economy of attention (see Zerubavel 2006; Sheriff 2000; Berman 1998; Bourdieu 1977). The individual, group or organization is the vessel through which multiple forms of networks of power-knowledge come into conflict, while intermingling, co-habiting, and reinforcing each other. Further the interaction between these unpredictable actors-contexts produces emergent unpredictable outcomes, like the hostage crisis, the Iran-Iraq war, or the impeachment of Banisadr. Based on this assessment, we may ask: Who created the Islamic Revolution? Or the Iran hostage crisis? Who started the Iran-Iraq war and who finished it? No one and everyone; these are emergent phenomena, produced through the vectoral interactions (Hunt and Wickham 1994: 33; Skocpol 1982) between embedded and incommensurable forces, voices, and faces. Each social actor is a bricolage (*sar-e ham bandi*) and the collective outcome is also a bricolage. Each social actor is largely unpredictable, and the collective outcome is largely unpredictable. This dynamics makes power look discretionary and atomic and as such unpredictable.

This dynamics of atomization of power is manifest in everyday experiences of the Iranian *dasein*. The common and popular notion of a mode of governance called *muluk-al-tawa'ifi* (rulers of tribes or clans) (see Katouzian 2010: 6) captures the (supposedly) discretionary nature of power in Iran. But in the modern times, such a tribe-based and clan-based power emanates from the prevalence of cultural clans and cultural tribes rather than the traditional clans and tribes. In the state of inbetweenness, a clan (*ta'efeh*)—the circle of people around prominent figures like Ayatollah Beheshti, Rafsanjani, the queen Farah, or Hoveida, for example—is a coalitional formation which is very fluid and unstable and has nothing to do with any geographical territory or any other form of stable affiliations. Due to the hyper-complexity of the politics of cultural tribes, an entrepreneur, for example, may obtain the licence for investing on a particular economic activity from a particular authority at time 1, but his 'licence to operate' may be revoked or ignored and by-passed by the same authority or by another authority at time 2 (see Frye 1984; Milani 2000; Ahmadi Amoui 2006, Amirahmadi 2012, for instance).

Thus, the power becomes time-inconsistent as preferences are time-inconsistent due to the competing devotions to the rival regimes of truth.

Consequently, the confusion in the realm of knowledge trickles down to the forms of governmentalities in the realm of power. That is why Jamalzadeh, the father of modern novel in Iran, implicitly calls Iran the house of the insane (*dar-al-majanin*, translated as lunatic asylum) (see Katouzian 2013: 250), and Forough Farrokhzad, the prominent modernist poet, portrays Iran as a leper colony in her short film (see Brookshaw and Rahimieh 2010), or Katouzian (2010: 4, 17), the prominent political economist, terms it as “the pick-axe society (*jame’eh-ye kolangi*)” or “the short-term society”. This is due to the nature and bewildering variety of different preference orderings and forms of governmentalities inhabiting the landscape of Iranian social order. The irreconcilable forms of ‘difference within’ finds opportunity to reveal itself when the ‘difference between’ is not activated or highlighted.

The phenomenon of (apparent) arbitrariness and discretionary nature of power, hence, is the unintended and emergent outcome of the dynamics of creation of voices out of the application of operation of addition and subtraction on the three sets of regimes of truth. In this process, paradoxically, the same three regimes of truth, which create chaos in the Iranian social reality, save it from degenerating into oblivion. This is quite similar to a dysfunctional family whose deep familial connections keep them together without ever turning it into a functional unit. The deep affiliations to the three regimes of truth (compactness) keep Iranians together without ever allowing them to build a peaceful and functional house of being (nation-state). As such the social order fluctuates between the state of chaos and the state of order without ever falling into stable states of total collapse or stable state of functional order. It oscillates between order and chaos and the states of elation and exuberance, and discontent and disillusionment, which creates dysfunctionalities and deformities in all realms of social life.

This state of deformity is at the heart of the Iranian bitter experience of backwardness and poverty. In essence, almost no Iranian institution functions as it is supposed to (Akhavi 1998: 701; Nasr 2000). This is despite the fact that Iran has adopted almost all institutions of modernity from schools, hospitals, to universities, prisons, legal system, transportation system, parliamentary system, banking system and economic institutions, and institutions of culture, sports, entertainment and many more, as almost none of them work smoothly the way they do in a normal country. The reason has to be located within the fitness frame, as they are not fit for purpose due to being transplanted and grafted into the social body and

forced to function through ineffective mechanisms as opposed to the mechanism for which they were created or innovated. In other words, these adoptions were made through the process of reverse social engineering without going through the evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization involving 'vanishing mediator' forms of adaptations, and therefore, they are vulnerable to de-legitimizing challenges launched by various forces, voices, and faces and as such are embroiled in the state of deformities and dysfunctionalities.

Consequently, adoptions of modern institutions without going through processes of gradual adaptations involving vanishing mediators are vulnerable to experiences of stillbornness, abortions, reversals, or deformities and dysfunctionalities. Stephanie Cronin (2007: 3), for instance, characterizes the Reza Shah's state's tribal policies by "abrupt reversals, sudden initiatives and equally sudden retreats". This common experience of institutional reversals and abortions is what Katouzian (2010: 17) terms as "the pick-axe society (*jame'eh-ye kolangi*)". This is the unintended outcome of the theory of selection (see Runciman 2009) from alternative social assemblages and their regimes of truth, and theory of emergence of new forms of life, work, and language and the issue of multiple realizability.

Examples of Chaotic Order

In this section we provide a few examples of chaotic order in different periods of the Iranian modern history.

Chaotic Order in the Constitutional Era

Katouzian (2011: 773–774) succinctly captures the state of affairs in the Constitutional Era by stating that: "The chaos that had followed the revolution had been such that constitutionalism quickly fell into disrepute". A series of events from Mohammad Ali Shah's coup to Anglo-Russian ultimatum over the demand for the dismissal of Shuster (1912), chronic experience of rampant inflation, Iran's reluctant entanglement into the quagmire of the First World War, alongside occurrence of famine and epidemics, incidences of rioting, looting and pillage, the emergence of local and regional movements instigating the fear of secessionism, and the British attempt to turn Iran into its protectorate through the 1919 agreement with Vosug-al-Douleh's government (Azimi 2008: 43; Katouzian

2011: 773–774; Afary 1995), served as the thousand cuts for the death of the Constitutional Revolution in the framework of lack of social cohesion due to irreconcilable differences within and between different social assemblages. Ultimately what caused the chaos was the fact that each cultural tribe tried to capture the centre and implement its own favoured package of reform or anti-reform without paying adequate attention to building capacity and consensus.

The prevalence of post-revolutionary chaos in this era is attested by Azimi (2008: 47) in the following description of the central government, which was deemed to be suffering from "political fragmentation, chronic cabinet instability, administrative incapacity, and lack of effective means and resources, particularly an adequate military force". The bitter division between radicals and pragmatists emerged within and between groups and these divisions further developed into diverse forms of extreme radicalism such as Amo-oghli's (see Sheikholeslami 2012) and extreme pragmatism like Vosuq-al-Douleh's (Azimi 2008). Civil society was as much divided as the state (see Schirazi 2002: 49–50; Fadaee 2012: 75, 127). As Azimi (2008: 39) attests, in the turbulent ambience of constitutionalism, "eight cabinets formed by six prime ministers during the twenty-one-month term of the first parliament". Afkhami (2009: 12) gives a glimpse of the prevailing chaos by stating that,

> In 1920, despite some fourteen years of constitutional experience, … Government coffers were empty, … Roads were unsafe, … Cities had turned into the bailiwicks of thugs, *lutis*, and *pahlavans*, … Around the country [various secessionist movements] …threatened the territorial integrity of the country. Adding to the chaos was …the 1919 Agreement [designed to turn Iran into a British protectorate].

The internal strife within and between different cultural tribes expressed through verbal and physical violence in an ambience of acrimony and antagonism, in a series of inevitable wars of attrition, exhausted the revolutionary movement.

Constitutionalism in its failure to create viable political, economic, and military institutions led to the state of chaos, culminating in the call for a strong man who could act as the final arbiter and the Iranian leviathan to restore social order through the systematic deployment of coercion. As Saidi Sirjani (2011) attests,

> Even the veteran journalist Majd-al-Eslam Kermani, in a leading article in the comic paper Kaškūl (5, 27 Rabīᶜ I 1325/10 May 1907), expressed longing for an exceptional personality to take the country in hand.

The numerous political associations and societies (*anjomans*) alongside a flourishing press which appeared in the constitutional era wanted good modernity, good Islam, and good Persianism, without paying attention to the fact that you cannot have goodness of any regime of truth without the less good and bad sides emerging with it. As such the politics of piety cannot emerge without the politics of ordinary. They further ignored the fact that one person's bad thing maybe another's good one and one entity's ordinariness is another one's piety. Ultimately the immersion in the hypercomplex state of belated inbetweenness led to the emergence and collapse of the Constitutional Revolution, as all cultural tribes did not possess adequate tools to understand each other and as such misunderstanding created violence and chaos, leading to the re-emergence of the Iranian leviathan as the final arbiter in the form of Reza Shah in 1925.

Chaotic Order in the ONM Era

This period started with the Reza Shah's coup and ended up with his son's coup and his top-down White Revolution, while in the middle experienced considerable level of turbulence manifested in the Reza Shah's forced abdication, various episodes of terrors and assassinations, and constant daily battles between the forces, voices, and faces in politics and in other realms of the Iranian social order. The social space was bursting with discontent, hatred, and various multilateral forms of verbal and/or physical violence in the period between 1941 and 1953, to the extent that the society "began to feel and even to express nostalgia for Reza Shah's rule after a few years" (Katouzian 2004: 39).

In this period, three final arbiters emerged consisting of two Pahlavi shahs in the name of Persianization with their own subprojects and one nationalist constitutionalist (Mosaddegh) in the name of modernization with his own subprojects. The system fluctuated between the state of chaos at the end of the Constitutional era and the beginning of the Pahlavi era and then in the period of 12 years after the forced abdication of Reza Shah, to the state of oppressive order enforced by iron fist in the Reza Shah's reign and Mohammad Reza Shah's post-coup establishment and even in the last months of Mosaddegh reign (as he was accused of despo-

tism even by his best friends and allies like Makki and Haerizadeh, for example) (Mojtahedzadeh 2011; Mirfetros 2011; Sahabi 2007). The intervention of external forces, as the final arbiters, was quite salient in this period in the rise of Reza Shah to power in 1925, in his forced abdication and replacement by his son Mohammad Reza Shah in 1941, and in the anti-Mosaddegh coup of 1953 and restoration of Mohammad Reza Shah to the power and offering extensive support to his system by the West. The West acted as the real final arbiter of the Iranian society on the scene and behind it.

It is worth noting that even without the coup, Mosaddegh's government was deeply in trouble, as the whole social order, the forces within the Mosaddegh's coalition or beyond it, were deeply divided on almost all aspects of how to organize the realms of life, work, and language. This is what Sahabi (2007: 155) alluded to:

> As Bazargan once said "the coup saved the National Front (*Jebhe-ye Melli*)" [from total annihilation] as the level of discord within the Front was such that the internal strife would have become scandalous and destroyed its reputation, ultimately ending up in dismantling the Front.

This is similar to the observation made by Ehtesham-al-Saltaneh (Ajodani 2003: 23) in the Constitutional era on how Mohammad Ali Shah's coup against *Majlis* was a blessing in disguise for the constitutionalists as it united them in their pursuit of constitutionalism; otherwise, they would have imploded earlier under the weight of their own internal infightings. The liberal Anglo-American alliance formed in support of the Shah only acted as the catalyst in the inevitable collapse of the Mosaddegh coalition which was already imploding from inside.

As such, embarking on different waves of the blame game, whether blaming the Shah, the West, Kashani, Mosaddegh, or the Tudeh Party (Mirfetros 2011; Mojtahedzadeh 2011; Ghaninezhad 2011) misses the point that the tragedy was produced by cosmic plot of the hyper-complex context, and the actors were only the instruments (*alat-e fe'l*) in an unfortunate and unintended tragic plot generated by the compound state of belated inbetweenness.

The example of what Mosaddegh said to Makki (1996: 20) regarding the Shah and Kashani is very telling in this regard: he said to Makki, "the Shah and Kashani should be kept in a castle as emblems, only to be taken out where and when they are needed." All sides wanted to do the same

and wanted to treat the voices and faces of alternative regimes of truth as emblems, ready to be activated and deactivated strategically. In effect, they desired to curb the virility of the radical others and castrate them and turn them into Islamic eunuchs, Persianist eunuchs, and modernist eunuchs (see Greer 1970/2008, for the notion of 'female eunuch'). But no force, voice, or face wants to be castrated from its virility and treated only as ceremonial and decorative entity; they all desire to shape the social order in their own image and subsume the alternative forces under their own appellation. This dynamics culminates in a state of chaos, which then is resolved partially and temporarily through resort to the final arbiter.

What was needed was a harmonized combination of all three regimes of truth without a priori prioritization of one regime over the others (which was manifest in the slogans like '*ham* Shah *ham* Mosaddegh', both the Shah and Mosaddegh, Rahnema 2005), which was partially pursued by the original founders of the Tudeh Party (Katouzian 1991: 162) or the National Front (*Jebhe-ye Melli*) which were supposed to act as broad churches for progressive forces. These projects did not have any chance to succeed as they required a non-violent theoretical space of mutual respect where the organic combinations could have the chance to emerge through a spontaneous and evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization, where new well-developed and consensual philosophies and policies could emerge to support new ways of thinking and living. The emergence of such an organic space of selection would be impossible in the state where each regime of truth operates in the binary space of good against evil, in interplay with the state of belatedness calling for quick and sound bite solutions to the urgent social ills.

Iranians had to resort to conspiracy theories, like "if you lift the beard of any cleric it is marked with the label 'made in Britain'" (Mojtahedzadeh 2011), to make sense of the permanent presence of evil and chaos in their social system. This fantasy blamed the West for the Iranian messy reality and for stealing the Iranian mojo (see Goldsmith and Reiter 2010) and *jouissance* (democracy, independence, or spirituality) from them. The West—or for some other forms of historiography, other forces, voices, or faces who had betrayed the ideals of the ONM like the Tudeh Party or the religious leaders or even Mosaddegh himself or the people themselves with their sudden change in allegiance to the Shah and his forces through direct support or through staying silent—became the quintessential evil other. This lethal blame game turned the 1953 coup into a traumatic

experience whose ghost hovers over the Iranians of various generations and guarantees the experience of subsequent waves of chaotic orders in the Iranian modern history.

As such, in such an atmosphere of mutual mistrust, conspiracy theory, and blame game, it was quite rational for the Shah to express his fear about "the end of all regimes of constitutional monarchy" and his frustration that "It was … "impossible to be a constitutional ruler" in Iran" (Milani 2011: 124). Ironically the answer he received from the British ambassador that "A dictatorship was also impossible" (Milani 2011: 124) was also true, showing the long-run non-viability and fragility of any form of final arbiter in the state of belated inbetweenness. It was inevitable that the Shah's 'public' belief in "democracy and rule of law" (Milani 2011: 103) would come into conflict with his 'private' belief in the role of a "powerful king" in the progress of Iran (Milani 2011: 103). Here we time and again notice how in the state of belated inbetweenness the gap between public and private views recurs frequently as a structural property of the whole order (*see* Kuran 1995, on how this gap leads to the sudden changes and revolutions).

Chaotic Order in the Islamic Republic Era

The state of mistrust and impatience associated with the three projects of reverse social engineering have created a state of innocent brutality, where the state and society, the incumbent and the opposition, and almost all social actors are permanently engaged in the act of mutual de-legitimization and wars of attrition (*namadmali*) enshrined in demonization of the other and glorification of the self.

Peter Gourevitch's (2003: 325) notion of 'convergent divergence' with regard to globalization is an example of a compound notion which serves as a device to bring the conflicting concepts together to elaborate on a hyper-complex reality comprising opposing tendencies (for the hybrid and seemingly contradictory notion of 'glocalization', see Ritzer and Atalay 2010: 319). In the context of Iranian belated inbetweenness, the notion of chaotic order (or organized chaos) is meant to demonstrate how order and chaos can coalesce to create a dysfunctional social reality. The chaotic element is manifested in the two features of the widespread prevalence of violence and in the diffused and atomic nature of power and its apparent arbitrary and discretionary nature (Moslem 2002: 181; Beeman 2005: 19;

Poulson 2006: 69). Regarding the diffused and dispersed nature of the power structure in the Islamic Republic, Rakel (2008: 32) makes the following observation:

> the formal system for policy formulation is often ignored or bypassed in favor of the informal power structure, based on personal networks and power relations.

The above description, while noting the hyper-complex nature of the multiple forms of governmentalities in Iran, is not entirely accurate as it assumes that the informal networks have more stability than the formal ones, while in reality the tragedy of confusion and mutual distrust plague both realms of formality and informality.

The daily discharge of negative energies in a cold civil war is complemented with the large earthquakes and volcanoes experienced in the form of social movements and revolutions (Foran 1993, 1994) with their associated episodes of repression and loss of lives and property and total restructuring of the social order in an attempt to rebuild it from ground zero. The cases of political executions, imprisonment, and torture alongside assassinations and bombings plus large-scale waves of migration in this period are just external manifestations of wider and deeper level of violence permeating the Iranian social order. The large violent events are supplemented by the daily hateful, vengeful, and spiteful exchanges in the media, within the public and private offices and in the streets, in schools and hospitals, and families, all releasing the dark matters and energies generated by the constant clashes between embedded plates of truth, warring for dominance and loyalty. Violence permeates the whole social order at micro, meso, and macro levels (see Katouzian 2010: 5; see also Abrahamian 1999, for political violence and Tizro 2012, for the case of violence against women, for instance).

One of the clear cases of instability in the process of group and coalition formation and its ensuing waves of violence was the conversion in the Mojahedin Khalgh Organization from Islam to Marxism (Abrahamian 1989; Jafarian 2007). This event shocked the political clerics and the rest of the constituency of Islamic resistance against the Shah's regime and created waves of mistrust and resentment between the Marxist and Islamic groups and within the Islamic movement, which erupted in violent forms in the post-revolutionary era. Due to this event, as Chehabi (1990: 215; see also Zibakalam 2008: 269) observes, "the unity of the Islamic movement in Iran was broken". The deep roots of conversion revolved around

the philosophical foundations of Marxism as ‘the science of resistance’ (*elm-e mobarezeh*), on the philosophy of history, on the nature of modern world, on the issues of property rights and class war, and the role of belief in metaphysical entities like God, and the hereafter, hell and heaven, and the angles, and so on.

It should be mentioned that the Mojahedin were examined by Khomeini in their philosophical foundations in the pre-revolutionary period and were deemed to be un-Islamic (Haghshenas 2012; Jafarian 2007). The problem seems to be that there was no strong religious philosophical alternative to the Marxist option and the conversion to Marxism for the militant forms of resistance was almost inevitable, as they were in urgent need of ready-made philosophical packages to legitimize and guide their resistance against the Shah’s regime and its Western backers. The tension between the two sides of the resistance divide was clear in “the state of prison in prison”, as described by Mohammadi Gorgani (2005, see also Jafarian 2007, Zibakalam 2008: 265–266 and 270–272), and the bitter strife between the *fiqh*-based religious side and Marxist side of resistance, where the religious side would count them as untouchables (*najes*) (Abrahamian 1999: 111; Abrahamian 1993: 46), while the Marxist side would bitterly complain about it—as along negative religious denotations it possessed deeply negative connotations in the popular culture as well—and treat the religious side as backward, reactionary, and metaphysical (a kind of modern *najes*).

This was deeply related to the issue of piety of unbelief (Fraser 2002; Shang 2006) and the question of whether unbelievers, in their search for truth, can attain truth and salvation through their thoughts and actions (see Jafarian 2007: 392, footnote 1 on Ayatollah Taleghani’s understanding of the piety of unbelief). This is, at a larger scale, related to the status of man as man and not as a believer and ultimately the relation between the path travelled by the mankind and the path travelled by the prophets (*rah-e anbiya va rah-e bashar*) (Chehabi 1990: 78, 211; Abrahamian 1989: 92). At the heart of these conflicts inside and outside the prison in the pre- and post-revolutionary eras were the torturous questions over the nature of science and modern world, metaphysics, good society, Islamic jurisprudence and its method of inference, and the nature of reality, knowledge, and truth. Ultimately, the verbal and physical violence have originated from the rift between the three incommensurable regimes of truth of non-orthodox modernity (Marxism) as a science of resistance to the orthodox modernity (capitalism) as a science of wealth creation and

Islam as a science of salvation and eternal happiness and Persianism as a science of communal coherence alongside their white and black books of records. Waves of verbal and physical violence in the form of poisonous political and ideological debates, street fights, imprisonments, assassinations, bombings, and summary executions followed these deep theoretical rifts on the nature of truth about life, work, and language in the post-revolutionary era. These were manifestations of waves of 'innocent cruelty' (Talebi 2011: 150; see also Arendt 1963, on the relevant notion of 'banality of evil' and Rejali 1994, 2007; Vahabi 2004).

The example of immense *disdain* shown to Bazargan in the post-revolutionary parliament and his (in)famous reaction to the martyred prime minister Rajaee's wife (Jannati 2010), where he reacted angrily to what Rajaee's wife had said against him by resorting to a proverb "the one who had not shat on us was the cut-tail crow (*anke be ma narideh bood kalaghe dom borideh bood*)," is clear example of the daily bitter experience of conflict within the new system. These daily incidents of verbal infightings have been complemented by a flood of "gossip, rumour-mongering and myth-making, or making jokes" (Katouzian 2010: 5). Another example is the astonishing case of the head of the Organization for Budget and Planning Roghani Zanjani's deputies being kidnapped for the sake of the economic policies they advocated by the security service authorities; they were interrogated and subjected to harassment and freed in unknown locations (Ahmadi Amoui 2006: 231). As Vali Nasr (2000) reports, the same type of incident happened in the Shah period to the experts in the Ministry of Economy. These are bewildering examples of how irreconcilable differences emanating from being located in the compound state of belated inbetweenness (and its impacts on generating mistrust and confusion on how to combine alternative regimes of truth) erupts into the expression of epistemic or physical violence (where the weaker sides predominantly resorts to verbal violence and the stronger side resorts largely to physical violence) in the form of mutual de-legitimization and mutual repression (*namadmali*, in the language of Banisadr) and the creation of waves of victimhood and culpability, where former victims become new perpetrators in the exercise of "innocent cruelty" (Talebi 2011: 150; Rezagholi 1998) where every side attempts to save its favoured truth basket and beloved order from the onslaught of the dark forces intent on overthrowing it.

The second element of chaos as enshrined in the atomic nature of power is fully captured by the notion of personal discretion (*saligheh-ye*

shakhsi) frequently used in the social discourses in this era. Constant waves of complaint are made about people holding private or public offices for acting on discretion. Clearly when there is historical consensus on a set of issues, there remains almost no social space for discretion. When it comes to sexual honour or observing the codes of behaviour in shrines (for instance, in the case of Reza Shah's queen entering the shrine in Qom without veiling, which provoked severe reactions, Sedghi 2007: 85) or in mosques or in Ashura processions or in Nowruz ceremonies, the rule of discretion is marginalized and the rule of norm and law prevails. As the issues around which the historical consensus have emerged are rare in the Iranian social context, almost all issues become sites for conflicts between different hybrid forms of forces, voices, and forces.

What is called discretion (*saligheh*) (Moslem 2002: 41, 74, 155) is the manifestation of the phenomenon where each social entity is inhabited by a distinct voice or collection of voices constructed out of a particular combination of different regimes of truth. In the frequent act of misunderstanding, every social assemblage treats its own positions as principled and others' positions as arbitrary.

The phenomenon of parallel institution in the post-revolutionary era alongside the common notion of 'states-within-states' (*doulat dar doulat*) prevalent throughout the Iranian modern history is the manifestation of the dispersed nature of power in the modern history of Iran. This means that in reality institutions or governments were not just restricted to serve the interests of particular groups or centres of gravity, formal or informal, on the scene or behind the scene, apparent or hidden, or official or mafia types; there were fundamental differences and divisions within any formal or informal centre of power.

Roghani Zanjani (Ahmadi Amoui 2006: 87, 187, 230) reports on how the chaotic situation ruled the social relations within and between different institutions of socio-political and economic governance. In a sense, confusion at the level of mind (Williamson's level zero) has spilt over and trickled down to the levels of institutions and governance. The following stark observation, made by Elaine Sciolino (2000: 360, added emphasis), points to this phenomenon:

> I've learned that it is impossible to talk about a monolithic Iranian "regime" any longer; the struggle for the country's future is far too intense for that. Today there is no unified leadership or all-powerful governmental superstructure that makes and executes all decisions. Rather, *power is dispersed*

> *among and even within many competing power centers, with varying agendas and methods of operation and degrees of authority.* Even as I write, *alliances are shifting. Players are adapting.*
> *Coalitions are building.*

The atomic and discretionary nature of power in the turbulent Reformist Era of Khatami's presidency is witnessed by Ash (2005, 2009, added emphasis) in the following terms:

> No one knows exactly where the limits are. As a result, there is both a remarkable freedom of intellectual debate and a permanent undercurrent of fear.

The same set of irreconcilable positions prevail in any other social issues related to life (dress code, sexuality and gender relation, vice and virtue, to name just a few), work (the issue of *riba* or interest, property rights, accumulation of wealth, national security, foreign direct investment, the use of sex in advertisements, the widespread prevalence of sexual adventures and harassments in the workplace or in the streets, income distribution, employer-employee relation and their rights and obligations, the issue of corporate and political governance, the relation between politics and economics, and the sources of the constitutional rules of the game, among others), or language (the precedence given to the three languages of Persian, Arabic, and English, the manifestation of eroticism and sexuality in poetry, literature and other forms of arts, the political language of regime change or insults levelled at the Shia infalliables, and the politics of auditing and censorship, among others). In such a state of total rupture within and between social entities where power is atomized, and violence pervades the social relation, the only way to restore a semblance of order, at least in the short run, is through the emergence of a final arbiter (the king or the *faghih* or the intellectual or the technocrat).

The post-revolutionary chaotic situation of unfettered freedom served as a fertile breeding ground for the explosive mushrooming of multitude of political parties and ideological groupings all over the country (see Boroujerdi and Rahimkhani 2018); they, by the dictates of their beloved regimes of truth, were intent on conducting a second revolution against the new clerical establishment and their religious intellectual allies (Banisadr 1981). The threat of the return of the old system and/or the risk of Iran being turned into a failed state called for the emergence of the

final arbiter to save the system from collapse, and Khomeini and his coalition in an improvised process of trial and error supplied it (without any intelligent design or omniscient and omnipotent master plan; see Ganji 2011; Hojjati Kermani 2011). Once again there is a logic of supply and demand at work here. The strange fate, common to the state of belated inbetweenness, is that the original post-revolutionary revivalist and theorist of the theory of *velayat-e faqih*, Ayatollah Montazeri, lost his faith in it while the one (Ayatollah Khamenei) who was against the addition of the adjective 'absolute' to it converted to it and assumed its mantle (Arjomand 2009: 34; Hovsepian-Bearce 2016).

Conclusion

This chapter addresses the repeated pattern revolving around how confusion is followed by chaos through the mediation of unstable coalitions and dysfunctional institutions, only for order to be restored through the emergence of various forms of final arbiters. The country relies on an army of final arbiters challenged vehemently and violently by an army of defiant resistance in all levels of governmentality to restore and destabilize the social order. It is shown that the compactness of the social space in the state of belated inbetweenness is responsible both for its drift towards chaos through factionalism at normal times and restoration of order through the unifying effect of the emergence of final arbiters. Chaotic order exists in everyday experiences, tending towards dangerous dose of chaos at critical times and tolerable level of chaos at normal times. The emergence of the final arbiter is addressed in the historical records through the notion of licence or arbitrariness of power or *hakemee'yat salighe* and *Moluk al-Tavayifi*. We show that power almost always stems from knowledge and the notion of arbitrariness comes from the misunderstanding of the other, seeing self as principled and the other as arbitrary, all rooted in the lack of emergent consensus. Various forms of violence normally follow such episodes of misunderstanding. When Khomeini and the Shah, Khomeini and Banisadr, Khomeini and Mojahedin, Khomeini and Saddam Hossein, Khomeini and Montazeri, Khomeini and the West, or Hashemi Rafsanjani and Ahmadinejad, among many others, fail to understand each other, waves of innocent cruelty follow. The unpredictability and diffusion of power is demarcated from the notion of decentralization in the homogenous or heterogeneous societies. The diffusion of power in each context of situation is explained by the idiosyncratic co-evolution of constellations

of power/knowledge/subjectivity at each particular and local situation. How various multiple forms of revolutionary, Islamic, modern, and Persianist credentials are produced, traded, and distributed between different social agents in any particular context determines how various forms of powers emerge, coalesce or collide, or go extinct. The emergence of final arbiter is the coping strategy of the system in creating order, while it simultaneously plants the seeds of next round of discontent and revolution and the emergence of a new final arbiter after going through the four-stage process of evolution.

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CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

Problematization

The subject matter of this study has been the bitter historical experience of socio-economic development in the modern history of Iran with all its diverse ramifications. The burning questions gnawing Iranian subjectivity and its unhappy consciousness revolve around the enigma of why Iran has not developed into an advanced society despite starting its experience of attempting to achieve socio-economic development with Japan more than a century ago. The Iranian experience of socio-economic development has been associated with excessive and intense levels of socio-political instability, coalitional repositioning, and waves of verbal and physical violence, institutional restructuring, and emotional upheaval. As a result, the contrast between the level of stability and development between the two countries (Japan and Iran) could hardly be more pronounced.

The enigma of the Iranian case is captured in the Shah's bitter expression of astonishment and despair about his people, as reported by Milani (2011: 3, added emphasis):

> More than once during the days of revolution, and later in exile, he asked, with unmistakable hints of contempt in the tone, "*What kind of people are these Persians?* After all We have done for them, they still chose to opt for this disastrous revolution".

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The question of the bitter experience of socio-economic development is translated into the enigma of the nature of Persian people (Iranianness) and their social order. This study has been set out to explore these sets of interwoven questions about the experiences of development and revolutions (political instability and violence) and their relation to the character and traits of the Persian people and their social order. This also represents an attempt to offer the outlines of an answer to the Shah's dark question. The question of the nature of Iranianness is, in turn, translated to a wider methodological question of "How can we analyse a social order and its historical evolution and experiences over time?", and the preceding chapters aimed at responding to this question within the historical examples covering various periods in the Iranian modern history by locating it within the theoretical and methodological formulations developed within this study.

Nature of Social Order and Modes of Analysis

The two large philosophical strands or modes of thought for the analysis of social phenomena are Heidegger's 'existential phenomenology' as opposed to Descartes' subject-object relation (*dasein* versus *cogito* or understanding versus explanation).

As the analyses in the preceding chapters indicate, this study takes a hybrid approach by embedding the Cartesian *cogito*'s reductionism in the analysis of complex systems and both in the Heideggerian *dasein*'s being-in-the-world through its three principles of embeddedness, emergence, and incommensurability. Being, in its compound and relational nature, is formulated as becoming using the Deleuzian process philosophy of difference rather than the Hegelian/Marxian philosophy of dialectics. This study treats social orders as social assemblages following Deleuzian process philosophy and Connolly's application of it in his works. In formulating the theoretical framework of this study, the three notions of embeddedness, emergence, and incommensurability have been deployed to characterize the social assemblages according to which they are almost always rooted in larger meaningful wholes, are emergent phenomena, and are invested with meanings, constituting a unique package of truth about the things of this world. Our world, as a social assemblage, acts as ecology of social assemblages and evolves through topological, typological, and axiomatic developments. This means that every social assemblage is located in the neighbourhood of other social assemblages, which act as its context

of situation complementing its own unique context of culture, according to Malinowski's terminology.

The ecology of social assemblages alongside its various forms of neighbourhood indicate the finitude of social assemblages as each social assemblage is a form of bounded rationality, limited by other assemblages residing in its neighbourhood. No social assemblage fills the whole of space-time continuum. This leads us to the analysis of social phenomena as what Foucault called 'analytic of finitude' (Howarth 2010: 21). The limits of social assemblages put them in the dynamic interplay between finitude and infinitude and in relation to the Heideggerian fourfold of mortals, gods, the earth, and the sky. As such, each social assemblage is blessed with its abundances and suffers from its lacks. This study further offers to characterize the finitude of social assemblages by deploying three Lacanian orders as three dimensions of each social assemblage and analyse their affirmative and negating dimension through the deployment of Foucauldian affirmative notions of power, knowledge, and subjectivity and Lacanian-Zizekian negating notions of repression, disavowal, and foreclosure. Furthermore, the Deleuzian process ontology and Castoriadis' analysis of imagination were used to characterize the affirmative dimensions of the real and the imaginary orders (see Bartlett et al. 2014).

Because of its hyper-complex structure, each social assemblage (at micro, meso, or macro levels) constitutes a class of its own and, consequently, is endowed with its own unique regime of truth with its distinct dictionary and particular set of denotations and connotation, its own unique trajectory of evolution, and its own unique world in which it is rooted. As such, to analyse social assemblages in their uniqueness, we need a science of singularities, incorporating the universal and particular dimensions of social phenomena. The landscape of social assemblages is the outcome of Deleuzian process of differentiation attained through the vertical and horizontal movements of the real, the symbolic, and the imaginary orders. The science of singularity is a careful combination of hermeneutics of understanding and hermeneutics of suspicion encompassing three levels of causation, complexity science, and cultural psychoanalysis and is produced through the cooperation between the analyst and the analysand (the social assemblages).

The approach taken based on Heideggerian *dasein*, in contrast to Cartesian *cogito*, does not objectify the subject of study and creates knowledge in a relational and participatory process. Furthermore, Heideggerian *dasein* acknowledges the embeddedness of the observer as much as the

observed and does not privilege the analyst to have (necessarily) monopolistic access to the truth about the observed over and above the self-analysis of the observed.

The worldhood of the other (the social actor) is detected through the particularity of the other's chain of signifiers. The set of denotations and connotations associated with each dictionary and its world of significations are discovered through the method of free association which allows the analyst to understand the social phenomena in their uniqueness and singularity of their embeddedness, emergence, and incommensurability. Davidson (2001: 186) addresses how repeatability/generality and uniqueness/singularity work in tandem in the process of generation of meaning through deploying the notion of "field of stabilization".

The various expressions of meanings by the social actors like Khomeini or the Shah alongside the emergent meaning invested in the historical events are used to map their 'field of stabilization' and the conscious and unconscious dimensions of their world of signification and how they interact, leading to the emergence of social events.

This process combines hermeneutics of understanding with hermeneutics of suspicion. Khomeini's famous phrases, for instance, "the economy is for donkeys" (Willis 1999: 166) and "There is no fun in Islam" (Wright 2000: 77), have been frequently and deeply misunderstood by the historical actors and historians alike, and even by his closest allies like Banisadr (1981, 2011). These cases of mutual misunderstandings have produced actions and talks, which in their interactions have given rise to the emergence of small and large events like the impeachment of Banisadr and the resulting violence in the streets. The example of quadrupling of oil prices in 1973–1974 and the Shah's reactions to it is another case where a great deal of misunderstanding of the Shah's position has occurred. At the time this misunderstanding was common amongst the economic experts and the West, and later on amongst the historians and the social scientists. This led to the misunderstanding of the Shah, his lifeworld and its interaction with the lifeworld of other historical actors, and ultimately the causes and meanings of the 1979 revolution. As Mafinezam and Mehrabi (2008: 25) report:

> Treasury Secretary William Simon has publicly described the Shah as a "nut" and as "irresponsible and reckless".

As Khomeini's intellectual ally Banisadr saw him as a nut, the Shah's American ally described him in the same way. Treating the radical other as nut or irrational is the tell-tale sign of the failure in the test of incommen-

surability and committing the cardinal sin of transference and/or counter-transference. Being imprisoned in one's own grid of intelligibility turns the exposure to alternative regimes of truth into the experience of irrationality and madness (being a nut).

Zizek (1997/2007: 13) refers to these marked differences between alternative regimes of truth by arguing that:

> a true historical break does not simply designate the 'regressive' loss (or the 'progressive' gain) of something, but the shift in the very grid which enables us to measure losses and gains.

The break Zizek referring to happens not only historically but also topologically in our daily encounters with the radical others. As such, the meanings of parts (like Ayatollah Khomeini's expressions or the Shah's positions) are determined in their relations with these meaningful wholes (regimes of truth). Thus, social phenomena (actions, talks, emotions, organization of objects, events) only attain strategic essence in their relations with a particular complex adaptive system and a world of signification. As Sayer (2000: 88) notes:

> If the only choice is between either regarding objects as having essences fixed for all time or conceptualising them as merely transient or even ephemeral … then most social phenomena, which lie in between these extremes, will be occluded.

When the relation with the meaningful whole changes, as the whole itself changes, the essence of everything—including man, woman, child, water, tree, the sun, stone and life and death, inflation and employment, oil, prosperity and mortality, and everything else—changes accordingly.

Thus, empirical and positivistic observations can only see the surface regularities without seeing the forces acting as condition of possibility for the emergence of law-like patterns in social orders. The observed regularity of 'spitting causes anger' (in the case of Martin Luther King advising the black activists not to respond to the spitting provocations of the white Ku Klux Klan members; see Hazen 2000: 93), for instance, holds only in larger sets of complex adaptive systems and worlds of signification. Spitting is part of a complex adaptive system of a body which is part of the ecosystem of the working of the earth, the moon, and the sun and other heavenly bodies which make life possible on the earth, and if that larger complex system is disrupted, the person who spits cannot spit as he could

not be alive. Sayer (2000: 88; see also Connolly 2013, 2011: 36–37), for instance, attests to the complexity dimension of all phenomena.

All these implies that in terms of understanding social phenomena, all social relations are embedded in a larger complex system and world of signification where the colour of the skin, for instance, is ascribed with certain meaning (a dictionary with its denotations and connotations) which culminates to the Ku Klux Klan's members spitting on the members of black liberation movement. King's theology disrupted the cause and effect relation—assumed to be axiomatic—between spitting and fury and rage. The different conception of culpability and responsibility in seeing the perpetrators as the passive agents and as the victims of larger forces of history, as formulated by King regarding Bull Connor (Vischer 2013: 22), for example, allowed the course of actions and reactions to fall within a different causational loop, where the spitting causes the sense of compassion and generosity of spirit rather than anger and hatred. The application of this logic to the case of 9/11 in the US or the 1953 coup in Iran would have provoked different reactions from what was observed in the American or the Iranian society.

In other words, observation at a positivistic and reductionist level fails to uncover the meanings, rationalities, and philosophical unconscious acting as condition of possibility of socio-economic behaviour and the emergent properties like dysfunctionalities associated with the institutions of money, banking, and state, and their relations with impermanence and permanence, spatiotemporal and eternal existence. This implies that ultimately every social phenomenon is the outcome of the interplay of context of culture and context of situation and cannot become the subject of reverse social engineering.

The following sections summarize the way the analytic of finitude has shaped the special characteristics of the Iranian social order. They further contemplate on the stylized facts of the Iranian modern history and on how the presence of philosophical tribalism has shaped the fate of the Iranian social order.

General Characteristics of the Iranian Modern History and Society

This section embarks on briefly enumerating the forces, voices, and faces at work in shaping the general characteristics of Iran in the modern era.

The Analytic of Finitude

All social assemblages with their regimes of truth assimilate elements of alternative social assemblages to overcome their own lacks, but some of them succeed (like the assemblage between modernity and Christianity or Buddhism, Connolly 2008) due to the work of vanishing mediators and some others do not succeed due to the lack of opportunity for the proper functioning of vanishing mediators, which itself is due to the demands of the state of belatedness. The dynamics of assimilation and appropriation of elements of alternative regimes gives rise to the emergence of pragmatic and radical orientations in each regime of truth, based on the measures of purity and impurity (like the Shah's incorporation of socialism in his White Revolution or Khomeini's incorporation of constitutionalism in his Islamic Republic). In the case of Taqizadeh, we see his zigzag movements between the height of revolutionary modernist radicalism against Mohammad Ali Shah and the depth of his modernist pragmatism in his alliance with Reza Shah where he saw himself only as an instrument (*a'lat-e fe'l*) of Reza Shah's will.

Regimes of truth, besides adopting from each other and forming radical and pragmatic orientations within themselves, demonize each other by highlighting the black book of the others, and glorify the self by resorting to the white book of the self in order to maintain their monopoly over the production of truth. As such truth is a thing of this world with potent productive and negating powers. It produces an order and negates the radical other.

In the state of belated inbetweenness, the mediating and vanishing forms of life, work, and language are absent as the ways of life and ideas and institutions are imported as finished packages from the various regimes of truth, which makes the whole social order deeply unstable. Furthermore, social agents are exposed to the heaviness of the burden of judgement and become confused between alternative regimes of truth and their truth claims and their adoptions from each other alongside disavowing such adoptions and attacking each other's dark sides.

Stylized Facts of Iranian History

The immersion in the state of belated inbetweenness acts as a fertile breeding ground for a series of features and properties, which have been regularly experienced throughout the modern history of Iran. The play of

forces, voices, and faces in the modern history of Iran has given rise to a series of regular patterns addressed here briefly as the stylized facts of the Iranian modern history.

Unpredictability

The most well-known fact about Iranian history and society is that 'the only predictable thing about Iran is its unpredictability' (Arjomand 1988; Saghafi 2004; Kurzman 2004; Amuzegar 2014). This fact envelops the three levels of causation, complexity science, and worldhood. It refers to the sudden change from one state to another where even small events can act as the tipping points for the social order, driving it into a new bifurcated direction. This happens at micro, meso, and macro levels.

This fact also implicitly acknowledges that Iranian society reacts to the events differently due to the nature of its world of signification. Similar events and trends may not trigger the start of a revolution in India or Japan, but they may do so in Iran ("system-specific causality"). It is frequently stated that the phenomenon that triggered the Islamic Revolution was "the publication of an insulting article about Ayatollah Khomeini in a mainstream daily newspaper" (Paidar 1995: 192). This phenomenon functioned as one of the triggering causes of the revolution, within a complex system of the Iranian social order where it acted as a case of butterfly effect, which itself operated in a world of signification trapped in the state of belated inbetweenness. The same phenomenon (insulting a prominent religious leader) may not act as a cause or as a triggering point for a revolution in the Japanese or Indian context of culture with their associated regimes of truth. The same applies to the events of the bread riot or the punishment of a merchant, for example, frequently alluded to as the triggering events for the Iranian Constitutional Revolution.

The unpredictability of the Iranian society points to the volatile nature of its embeddedness and its confusion over how to synchronize different regimes of truth. One of the manifestations of the Iranian unpredictability is the phenomenon of sudden rise to prominence, followed by gradual daily process of wars of attrition, followed by equally sudden collapse into nothingness. This trend was captured by Boroujerdi's (2010) resort to Iqbal's famous poem "*trashidam, parastidam, shekastam* (I carved an idol, worshiped it, and smashed it)". The people of Iran carved Mosaddegh, for instance, worshiped him and then smashed him. Iranians at various levels frequently blamed their own people for being 'wax-like', 'spineless', or

'chameleon-like'. This study demonstrates that the people, both in the supply and demand side of the market for truth, have not been culpable for such 'identitylessness' and carving of idols, worshiping them and then smashing them; they were only the passive agents (*a'lat-e fe'l*) of the larger voices and forces inhabiting them and working through them. This is due to the dynamics of preference ordering and the impatient nature of supply and demand for multiple forms of truth in the form of instrumental rationality, communicative rationality, and emancipative rationality. As such, the unpredictability and its associated state of identitylessness is the logical implication of immersion in the state of belated inbetweenness.

Zigzag Movements

The discursive and non-discursive practices associated with various experiences and events oscillated manifestly between polar extremes in a state of tri-polarity. These are the zigzag movements of a drunken social order immensely confused about the direction it needs to take and the goals it desires to peruse. The sudden rise enjoyed by the constitutionalist movement, Pahlavi dynasty, the ONM, and the Islamic Revolution has been associated with persistent threat of collapse and experience of near-collapse or actual collapse. All various brands of the social order at all levels have been under siege due to the lack of multiple forms of legitimacy. All regimes have suffered from being haunted by the spectre of collapse leading to the collapse of three (the Constitutionalism, the ONM, and the Pahlavi) while the spectre of sudden fall hovered incessantly over the other. The zigzag movement is experienced at all levels (micro, meso, and macro) within and between the alternative regimes of truth and their associated projects of reverse social engineering. Ayatollah Khamenei (2010; see also Hovsepian-Bearce 2016) attests to the prevalence of zigzag movements within the Islamic Republic in the following terms:

> When we say 'the Islamic-Iranian paradigm' we mean a comprehensive plan. Without a comprehensive plan, we will face confusion, just as we have been suffering from zigzag and purposeless movements during the past 30 years and we have been running around without a plan. Sometimes we carried out a movement [plan] and then we did the opposite—in cultural areas, economic areas and different other areas. This was because of the lack of a comprehensive plan.

These zigzag movements in all realms of life, work, and language are symptoms of a society trapped in the doubly troublesome states of belatedness and inbetweenness, triggering the search for a panacea and a source of *jouissance* acting as a sudden cure for all of its ailments and discontents. The phantasy of sudden embrace of 'The Thing' itself bewildered and bedevilled Iranians to the extent of madly searching for the alchemy of turning all the dark and bitter elements of the social order into bright and sweet components of happiness and success. The search for different forms of utopias frequently culminated into the deep entrapment in various types of dystopias, which breeds an affectivity and emotional economy fluctuating between excessive exuberance and intense infatuation, and deep disappointment and bitter disillusionment, and despair. This leads the Iranian *dasein* to oscillate between the state of self-righteousness and self-loathing.

As a result of turbulence in the Iranian embeddedness between the three regimes of truth, one of the prominent stylized facts of the Iranian modern history is its oscillation between the three large projects of reverse social engineering: Persianization (the Pahlavi dynasty's project, the recent nostalgic calls for the return of the Pahlavis), modernization (Mashrooteh Revolution, Mosaddegh's ONM, and Khatami's Reformist Movement), Islamization (Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri in the Constitutional Revolution, Navvab Safavi and Fadaiyan Islam in the ONM era, and the Islamic Revolution).

All of these stabilizing and destabilizing movements occurred in the spirit of reverse social engineering corresponding to the needs of the intersection between the state of belatedness and the state of inbetweenness. Abrahamian (2008: 152; added emphasis) refers to one of these social engineering projects in the form of the Shah's changing of the Iranian calendar in the following terms: "Iran *jumped overnight* from the Muslim year 1355 to the imperial year 2535." The same series of *jumps* were taken to manufacture the desired outcomes in the realms of the women's veiling and men's dress code, land distribution, gender relations, language policy, historiography, legal reforms (e.g. regarding the social vices), culture, education, economy, and other areas of social order from the Mashrooteh era to the first Pahavi's era, the Mosaddegh's ONM, second Pahlavi's reign, and in the Islamic Republic (in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods).

In the post-1979 revolutionary era, the Iranians have travelled the full circle once again. This era has been a miniature portray of the last 200 years. Khomeini's project of Islamization of life, work, and language with its three subprojects managed to reverse the Pahlavi Persianization project

with its own three subprojects, only to be greatly modified by Rafsanjani's developmentalist project of economic modernization (within the bounds of Islamization project). Rafsanjani's and Khomeini's projects were greatly revised by Khatami's project of political modernization, which was totally reversed by Ahmadinejad's project of back to the basics of the original revolutionary project of Islamized social justice involving advancing and revising Khomeini's project itself by hyper-activating the discourse of apocalypticism and the Occultation and Uprising of Imam Mahdi. Ahmadinejad's project was challenged greatly by the Mousavi-led Green Movement and its own project of revival of Khatami's project of political modernization combined with selective elements of Rafsanjani's economic modernization and Khomeini's project of social justice. This led Ahmadinejad to tilt towards Persianization in his second term in office, without much credibility and success. Rouhani's project of back to the basics of Rafsanjani's project of developmentalism reversed the Ahmadinejad's revolutionary project while Ahmadinejad himself flirts with a project of radical Persianism with Islamic accent. In the bread riots of 2018 and the following waves of call for the overthrow of the Islamic system within and outside Iran, the society seems to have lost patience and endurance with all strands of projects of modernization and Islamization, only to move back to the revival of project of Pahlavi-based Persianization via experiencing a form of collective nostalgia for the Reza Shah period.

In the meantime, throughout this period the Islamic republic was under siege from within and without by the Iranian opposition and by the Western pressures and interventions calling for its overthrow. The larger society has been moving from the discourses and practices of social freedom and corporate welfare statism of the Shah period to the ethos and ethics of martyrdom and messianism in the revolutionary period only to move towards waves of Westernization through lived experiences of conspicuous consumerism, cowboy materialism and sexual permissiveness while simultaneously maintaining and adhering to the intense desire and devotion for the religious rituals of travelling to pilgrimage to the holy shrines and participation in religious carnivalistic processions and rites. Overall, we see the revival of the traces of the Pahlavi Persianist model with its social freedom, developmentalism, and welfare statism and seek the protection of the big Other of the international order, namely, the West (see Amuzegar 2014; Parsa 2016; Pourezzat et al. 2018; Khosravi 2017, among others, for these trends). What we face is waves of manifold resistance to resistance. The Islamic Republic is a form of spiritual resis-

tance to the global hegemony of modernity, and the internal trends and tendencies within Iran are forms of resistance to the attempted hegemony of the political Islam inside the country. These are the symptoms of wider and more complex desires. The society does not yearn for one thing over others. It yearns for co-existence of all dimensions of the Iranian complex human condition of belated inbetweenness. The Shah, Mosaddegh, Taqizadeh, Khomeini, Rafsanjani, Khatami, Ahmadinejad, Mousavi, and Rouhani each tried to offer a unique brand of hybrid form of combination of Islam, Persianism, and modernity with different emphases and omissions, affirmation and negation, not satisfying the complex demand side of the market for truth.

Throughout more than a century, the nature of Iranian selfhood and its essence has been the site of violent wars of attrition between alternative regimes of truth and their corresponding projects of reverse social engineering. All three sets of projects in the Iranian modern history had their own version of nationalism and internationalism, entailing three different projects of nationalizing and internationalizing Iran. The social order as a whole alongside each social assemblage at micro and meso level oscillated between bikini and burkini, political anti-colonialist jihadism and lip-stick jihadism, and ultimately between three time zones of short-termism of modernity, medium-termism of Persianism, and eternal time of Islam. The state of belatedness resulting from the violent encounter with the totalizing nature of modernity acted as the condition of possibility for turning the three regimes of truth into the three distinct projects of social engineering (ideological blueprints or 'comprehensive plans'), each inducing their own episodes of innocent cruelty.

The irreconcilable differences within and between different voices created another stylized fact of the Iranian history entailing the oscillation between anarchy and despotism, where the springs of freedom in the Constitutional era, the ONM era, and early years of Islamic revolution quickly resulted in a state of paralysis and/or civil wars where widespread levels of social chaos and anarchy were followed by the emergence of a final arbiter. The rule of the final arbiters (Amir Kabir, Taqizadeh's revolutionary committee, the first Pahlavi, Mosaddegh, the Shah, Khomeini/Khamenei) and their discretion[1] has been challenged by waves of de-

[1] The phenomenon of the emergence of final arbiter permeates the whole social order where every realm requires a smaller-scale final arbiter to resolve its smaller-scale wars of attrition between various voices and cultural tribes emanating from irreconcilable differences

legitimization from all sides, leading to its siege mentality and the possibility or actuality of the final collapse, culminating to the emergence of another round of the truth cycle.

Each truth cycle breeds waves of innocent brutality in a series of tit for tat courses of epistemic and/or physical violence between and within the incumbent and the opposition forces. The repression of the other has frequently culminated in the return of the repressed, which is another stylized fact of Iranian modern history where the zombie of religion came back to haunt the Persianist modernizers after the repression of religion in the Pahlavi era, and the return of the zombie of secularism after its repression in the Islamic era alongside the return of veiling and the return of unveiling to haunt two different projects of social engineering. The irreconcilable differences within and between the incumbent and the opposition forces have been replicated in all social groups and classes from the clergy to the intellectual, the poet, the worker, the merchant and the technocrat, and other realms of social life within families, organizations, and voluntary groups and plagued the social order throughout the modern period of Iranian history.

The Incessant Conflict Between Radicals and Pragmatists

Another stylized fact of the Iranian modern history revolves around the fact that the differences within and between voices are frequently translated into the conflict between radicals, who have been searching for ideological purity, and pragmatists, who lacked ideological justification but have been looking for practical solutions to practical problems while trying to stay loyal to the fundamentals of their affiliated regime of truth. The roots of these turbulent experiences within and between different forces, voices, and faces was their theory of selection; the irreconcilable differences in what can and cannot be *selected* from different regimes of truth and what regime of truth should act as *the base* or platform for selection. In a sense, the question of selection revolves around what should be grafted to what, how and why. The two issues of selection, hence, were

between and within forces, voices, and faces in schools, hospitals, municipalities, clubs, families, and so on. As such the system becomes addicted to the (apparent) discretionary rule of an army of final arbiters (with conflicts within and between them) at all levels rather than the rule of law or any other form of social cohesion. This is at the root of atomic nature of power in Iran, the emergence of the parallel institutions, and the phenomenon of state within state as other stylized facts of Iranian modern history.

subsumption, and substitution/complementarity; what needs to be subsumed under what and what should substitute or complement what.

Throughout these periods of turmoil, Iranians strived to liberate themselves, with different degrees of emphasis at different periods of time, from the religious, tribal, revolutionary, oriental, and occidental (liberal) forms of despotism and to embrace negative and positive freedoms (liberation from despotisms of nature and man) alongside spiritual freedom from the tyranny of desire and terror of death (especially through the discursive and non-discursive practices associated with martyrdom and/or mysticism). The three regimes of truth and their affiliated projects of social engineering possessed their lacks and abundances and each attacked the legitimacy of the other based on the white book of the self and black book of the other.

The act of appropriating the best of rival regimes of truth alongside the act of strategic activation and deactivation of discourses and disavowing such adoptions frequently led to lack of credibility and legitimacy for such hybrid voices and faces, which through the wars of attrition between waves of radicalism and pragmatism have bred frequent episodes of innocent cruelty of all against all. The new waves of the conflict between radicalism and pragmatism are emerging in the realms of historiography and theorization, as, for example, Mirsepassi (2010: 41–42) launches vehement attacks against opposing generations of radicals from Ale-Ahmad and Shariati in the anti-West camp to Doostdar, Tabatabai, and Shayegan in the pro-West camp. He offers his own version of radical pragmatism. These waves of radicalism and pragmatism manifest themselves on each and every issue of life from veiling to relations with the West, Israel, and Palestine; the prevalence of *riba* in the banking system; the issue of corruption; the issue of sexual education and sexual freedom and their limits; the order of priority bestowed to Farsi, Arabic, or English languages; and almost every small and big issues of life, work, and language.

Blaming the Resource Curse and/or the Alliance Curse

Iranians have frequently blamed the oil and its associated rent-seeking behaviours or the West for their plights (Amuzegar 2014; Vahabi 2018). In reality, Iran cannot attain socio-economic development not exclusively because of the rampant level of rent-seeking and predatory behaviour, which is a chronic symptom of lack of trust due to the emergence of irreconcilable differences in all realms of life, but mainly because it cannot be a

transparent and accountable economy open for business and act as a land of opportunity, which prevents it from combining cooperation and competition, order and change, and market dynamism of creative destruction with stabilizing function of welfare state (or any other form of safety net like lifetime employment model in Japan). Predatory, corrupt, and rent-seeking behaviours and tendencies alongside predatory and rentier states in Iran (see Lal 1984; Stiglitiz 1990; Rezagholi 1998, 2007; Vahabi 2015, 2017) are not prime movers and are by-products of lack of transparency, accountability, and social capital (trust) in the state of belated inbetweenness (see Gohardani 2017, 2018a, b). The oil is not the curse for the Iranians (Smith 2007; Esfahani et al. 2013; Ross 2015; Rahmati and Karimirad 2017) but their ruptured embeddedness and its associated confusion is. As Watts (2004: 75) maintains, "oil's contribution to war or authoritarianism builds upon pre-existing (pre-oil) political dynamics." Similar forces and voices produced remarkably similar patterns and trends in the Iranian socio-economic order in the pre-oil and post-oil periods.

This establishes a general rule of our methodology where no single factor or collection of factors can act as a cause for backwardness or progress (or any other social phenomenon)[2]; the work of factors is almost always mediated by the sedimented layers of social embeddedness, and as such the same factors have manifestly different outcomes in different historical forms of life. Foreign interventions, for instance, in Japan and Germany have different effects from foreign intervention in Mexico, Iran, or Russia. The unshakable alliance with America has affected the process of development in South Korea manifestly differently from the Shah's Iran or Saudi Arabia.

If access to oil revenue acts differently in Norway compared to Iran, it is because of their manifestly different worldhoods. What ultimately creates widespread level of turbulence in the Iranian socio-economic order is not the presence or absence of oil revenue and the tragedy of commons, but the tragedy of confusion, formation of unstable coalitions, institutional failures and chaotic orders emerging out of the affiliation to the warring regimes of truth and their internal divisions and the burden of judgement they put on the Iranian *dasein*. This applies to Iran irrespective of oil.

[2] In the literature on economic growth, for example, 145 variables have been identified to have affected the level of growth (Durlauf et al. 2005: 608; Kataryniuk and Martínez-Martín 2018: 63; see also Easterly 2007a, b). This equally applies to the rate of domestic violence against women, the rate of suicide or crime, car accidents, or any other social phenomenon.

The alliance with the West (or lack of it) is not a curse or a blessing either and has a similar effect to the effect of the oil revenue. The West is a resource and a force of nature which can be tamed and deployed constructively or destructively depending on the existence (or lack) of social cohesion (Ibn Khaldon's *asabiya*). We have countries like Saudi Arabia forging stable alliance with the West who have not joined the league of developed nations while others like South Korea or Japan have. We also have countries like Egypt changing their direction from the anti-West to pro-West approach and still did not reap the benefits in terms of drastic bifurcation in their development experience (see Root 2008: 140–144).

The Ultimate Pattern

The ultimate pattern governing the history of modern Iran is the four-stage mechanism (in the realm of hermeneutics of suspicion), which is produced as an emergence (unintended consequence) out of the interaction between forces, voices, and faces plagued by philosophical tribalism (in the realm of hermeneutics of understanding). The failure (foreclosure) to understand the radical other through 'thinking the unthinkable' led to frequent experience of multilateral misunderstanding, which in turn through their interactions through wars of attrition lead to the emergence of the four-stage mechanism governing the events of the Iranian modern history. Ultimately, if Iranians are suffering from a curse, it is a truth curse and not the resource or alliance curse. In the Iranian 200-year vicious truth cycles, another project of reverse social engineering may have exhausted itself and another revolution (Parsa 2016) may be imminent, but it solves almost nothing.

Philosophical Tribalism

The society-wide turbulence and its waves of innocent cruelty (banality of evil) are ultimately rooted in the poverty of languages deployed in the process of understanding the uniqueness and singularity of the Iranian state of belated inbetweenness. The languages and categories of thought and modes of reasoning available through standard packages of truth (modern versus non-modern, scientific versus non-scientific, religious versus non-religious, Persian versus non-Persian) are not fit for understanding the nature of the Iranian selfhood and its immersion in the state of confusion where the radical others of modernity, Islam, and Persianism

operate as the integral parts of the Iranian fractured selfhood with multiple contradictory forms of loyalties, devotions, and affiliations.

Misunderstanding and its associated innocent brutalities relates to the philosophical tribalism on failure to understand the radical other. Understanding the radical other requires overcoming the limits of the addicted grid of intelligibility and understanding the other in her own terms through uncovering her world of signification with its own dictionary and associated denotations and connotations. The inability to understand the other leads to the inability to understand the self as the other is constitutive of the self. The self is universal, particular, and singular at the same time.

Philosophical tribalism leads to the Iranians treating each other with contempt, disgust, and hatred as the untouchables (*najes*), which is another stylized fact of the Iranian modern history. Each side treats the voice of the radical other as a "pile of nonsense" (*charand va parand*) resurfaced, in a way, in the notion of *khar-o-khashak* (thorn and thistle, connoting the notion of riffraff) deployed by President Ahmadinejad against the protestors to the results of the 2009 presidential election (Dabashi 2011b: 33), or at best as "magnificent impasse" (Khalaji 2010). While Kasravi saw the Persian poetry and Persian mysticism as nonsense or magnificent impasse (Ajodani 2003; Ridgeon 2006), Rezagholi (2007) viewed the Iranian history as a sorry story of uninterrupted experience of despotism, Avini (1997) regarded modernity as a novel form of superstition, Doostdar (1993, 2004) theorized the Iranian form of religiosity as dark rays (*derakhshash-haye tireh*), Rahnema (2011) saw it as a historical form of superstition, and Khalaji saw *fiqh* as a magnificent impasse.[3] Ironically, in the state of belated inbetweenness, all sides of the truth cycle are neither pure light nor pure darkness, but 'rays of dark illuminations' as they are associated with white books of light and black books of darkness. This equally applies to modernity, Islam, and Persianism with their internal divisions and subdivisions. This captures the roots of the state of confusion and the extreme heaviness of the burden of judgement for the Iranian *dasein*. Because of the state of belated inbetweenness and its associated irreconcilable differences, Iranians treat each other as shacks of

[3] As opposed to Dawkins' (2006) "The God Delusion", Johnston's (2014: 20) "principle of no illusion" or Davidson's "principle of charity" (Baggini and Fosl 2010: 114–118; Davidson 1984: 155–170) can be good guiding principles or heuristics, in trying to understand the radical other. These principles need to be applied to Dawkins' works as well.

ruins and untouchables as they lack common grounds and vocabularies allowing them to agree to disagree and have unity without uniformity. This in turn does not empower them to grant each other the status of legitimate interlocutors in the social production of truth about life, work, and language.

Blame Game

As Iranians are not able to understand each other (and as a result, their own selfhood) and fail to understand how this failure to understand each other generates the chaotic situation in the Iranian modern history through the functioning of a four-stage mechanism, they embark on various forms of intentional fallacy of blaming particular forces, voices, or faces as the main cause of the Iranian state of socio-economic backwardness. If and when the discourse of decline and backwardness is replaced with the discourse of belated inbetweenness, the need for playing the blame game disappears entirely. As such, within the discourse of decline and backwardness, a series of reductionist analyses have blamed the internal or external causes for the Iranian state of backwardness, ranging from economism to sociologism, psychologism, environmentalism, and culturalism, where, for example, the Iranian arid environment manifested in the scarcity of water was believed to have caused a particular form of chronic despotism shaping the Iranian modern history (Katouzian 2010). Other causes were deemed to include the Iranian cultural trait of intolerance or laziness and non-receptive attitude towards hard work, the prevalence of bad governance and mismanagement, the presence of mafia groups at all levels of society, lack of civil society, external forces of imperialism and colonialism and their constant interventions in the Iranian history, and rent-seeking behaviour induced by the oil revenue, among others. This is a short list of the causal analyses offered for the Iranian state of socio-economic underdevelopment. These explanations suffer from the flaws of 'the black box theories' and atomistic analysis of social order away from its embeddedness in complex adaptive systems and worlds of significations.

At a more systemic level of analysis prevalent amongst almost all social actors, from the historical actors to the historians and from the lay people to the theorists, the following trend in misunderstanding of the radical other and the self can be identified. The blame is laid on the perceived dark side of one, two, or all regimes of truth (religious despotism, oriental despotism, liberal despotism (Jamal 2012; Ikenberry 2011) or revolution-

ary despotism), and the remedy is offered in a theory of selection which prioritizes the perceived white side of one regime of truth as the base for selection of the white components from the alternative regime of truth, all packaged in a comprehensive blueprint for the act of reverse social engineering. Almost all schools of thought (with leading figures like Akhundzadeh, Malkam Khan, Agha Khan Kermani, Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri, Taqizadeh, Kasravi, Fardid, Al-e Ahmad, Shariati, Khomeini, Bazargan, Sayyed Hosein Nasr, Shayegan, Doostdar, Tabatabai, and Soroush, among others) can be positioned on a continuum spanning over the dark and white sides of various regimes of truth and their particular brand of the theory of selection; the detailed exploration of this spectrum could not be presented here due to the limits in space and scope.

The Persianists like the Shah, for instance, cursed the black and red reactionaries as his untouchables (*najes*) while Khomeini blamed the dark forces of Persianist kingdom, and modernity and its political and materialist forms of despotism alongside blaming what he called American Islam, which is a version of religious despotism. Many others have committed the intentional fallacy and have tried to find the culprit in the intensions of rulers or the oppositions in the form of their mischievous pursuit of power and wealth or fame (see Gohardani and Tizro 2018). Iranians frequently activate and circulate the discourses of victimhood in the form of blaming a particular perpetrator in the form of "they came, killed, devoured and looted" (*koshtand va khordand va bordand*). This set of free associations puts every new group of rulers in the status of the most familiar dark force of the Iranian history, Genghis Khan, which easily allows them to make sense of their historical plights through the dualities of rulers/ruled and perpetrators/victims. At any time 2, the Iranians react to their bitter experience at time 1 by nominating a new set of perpetrators while remaining incognizant to the overall patterns and regularities governing their modern history. The perceived perpetrators change but their sense of victimhood stays the same.

In the search for explaining and curing the chronic malaise of the Iranian society, each cultural tribe of any colour or persuasion frequently attributes the pursuit of truth to the self and the pursuit of power and wealth to the others. The self is framed as principled and devout, the other as spineless and devious. They portray themselves as following the ethics of care and service while the other almost always acts upon the urge for ulterior motives and anti-ethical codes of selfishness and power-thirstiness, which demonstrates Iranians' theoretical confusion on human values and the relation between truth, goodness, power, interests, and subjectivity.

Philosophical tribalism (Hobfoll 2018; Haidt 2012; Rozenblit 2008) in understanding the other and the self culminates in the emergence of the truth cycles where alternative regimes of truth come to dominate the social order intermittently, where their dominance and their instability are manifested in the four Williamson's levels of price mechanism, organizational governance, institutions, and mind and lead to the oscillation between the four states of tragedy of confusion, formation of unstable coalitions, dysfunctional institutions, and emergence of a chaotic order.

Outlines of a Non-Solution Solution

This section outlines a series of non-solution forms of solutions. Iranians may need to come to the realization that they inhabit the genre of tragedy and not the epic of good against evil, modern against pre-modern (tradition), or patriotism versus non-patriotism. The Iranian subjectivity, power, and knowledge seem to be trapped in the state of belated inbetweenness and are torn between affiliations to the alternative regimes of truth. Iranian social assemblages (micro, meso, or macro) are fractured and ruptured units rather than being coherent and unified ones. As such the categories and concepts deployed for the homogenous or heterogeneous societies may not be applied to the troubled societies like Iran with ruptured embeddedness. What seems to be required is a non-combative, non-violent (epistemic or physical) approach to the understanding of the alternative forces, voices, and faces and making genuine attempts to enter the radical others' lifeworlds (see Brinkmann 2013: 22–23) and to learn their different forms of languages and their dictionaries, and discovering particular ways each particular voice offers to combine different forms of rationalities. By listening to the various voices and offering the best and most rational defence of their positions based on their own particular grid of intelligibility and its conscious and unconscious dimensions through combining hermeneutics of understanding and hermeneutics of suspicion, the context may become ready for the acceptance of all the voices with the truth claims to act as the legitimate interlocutors in the social production of collective capacity and consensus on embeddedness and its dimensions of goodness, truth and beauty. As Hausmann and Hidalgo et al. (2013: 16) maintain, "Ultimately, differences in prosperity are related to the amount of tacit knowledge that societies hold." We need to pave the way for the common production of consensual forms of emerging tacit knowledge.

In terms of hermeneutics of understanding, the social agents' accounts of themselves and their social order should be taken at face value to be used in the reconstruction of their internal rationality. Alongside this dimension, as no social agent is fully present to herself due to the unconscious dimensions, their accounts and actions should be used, based on hermeneutics of understanding and suspicion, to further complement the attempt to discover the internal logic of different voices and faces and how they interact to culminate in the emergence of events and experiences. The historical agents (such as Khomeini or the Shah or any other actor) are not necessarily the best judges of their own world of signification—they are mute dreamers (*gong-e khabdideh*) as psychoanalysis teaches us—but their accounts, actions, and emotions are the windows and avenues, which can lead us towards the faithful discovery of their lifeworlds. Texts and contexts, intertextualities and intercontextualities should be used in the service of the faithful reconstruction of all voices with truth claims.

As such, the social agents are neither totally ignorant nor fully aware of their own grid of intelligibility. The faithful understanding of the lifeworlds of various social assemblages and agents, as combinations of conscious and unconscious dimensions, requires a careful combination of hermeneutics of understanding and hermeneutics of suspicion.

What the compound state of belated inbetweenness needs appears to be the non-combative thinking rather than critical thinking. The condition of possibility of critical thinking seems not to be available in the Iran's current compound state of belated inbetweenness. The state of belated inbetweenness has put Iran contingently in a state of "broken mirror" (Ridgeon 2008: 148). When you have a broken mirror (incommensurability), you lack common measures required for conducting critique. The exercise of non-combative thinking paves the way for understanding each other's truth claims, which makes national dialogue possible, preparing the ground for the emergence of a common grid of intelligibility which makes the practice of critical thinking possible. The practice of non-combative thinking (through avoidance of counter-transference and avoidance of projection of one's own lifeworld to the radical other) needs to be done unilaterally and initiated from any voice interested in ending the more-than-a-century of history of turbulence and violence and should be practised towards all voices whether in power (incumbent voices) or out of power (the opposition voices). We may be required to announce unilateral cessation of all hostilities and declare unilateral truce in our research, and our thoughts, actions, and emotions.

In effect, what seems to be required is declaring a unilateral truce in the incessant waves of wars of attrition between the alternative truth camps. This includes listening to the voice of the ruling clerics, the opposition clerics, the West and American establishment and the ruling religious intellectuals or the opposition secular intellectuals, and the Persianist monarchists and the supporters of the Persian poetry and literature, among others. The voices of radicals affiliated to all regimes of truth should be listened to alongside paying careful and loyal attention to the voices of the pragmatists of all sides. The unilateral practice of the art of listening appears to be the prerequisite of the possibility of achieving irreversible change in the historical experience of turbulence and violence. Being a *dasein* allows the researcher to be a strategic *cogito* to understand other *daseins* through the method of free association. This is a way to avoid "the dialogue of the deaf" (Kamrava 2018: 7) and offers a theoretical expansion for the notion of being an ironist in the language of Rorty (1989: 80):

> Ironists are afraid that they will get stuck in the vocabulary in which they were brought up if they only know the people in their own neighbourhood, so they try to get acquainted with strange people …, strange families …, and strange communities.

In this process 'strange' becomes familiar and 'familiar' becomes strange, all not as a playful exercise in postmodernism with stable and functional institutional framework, but a bittersweet exercise in the state of belated inbetweenness with institutional failures, deformities, and dysfunctionalities.

The experience of brutality from the rival forces, voices, and faces (the sense of victimhood) does not necessarily prevent any voice from exercising a non-combative form of thinking since the prevalence of brutality is rooted in the confusions and dissonances associated with the state of belated inbetweenness, and as such is a form of innocent cruelty and banality of evil. The actions and talks of people can be criticized according to their own adhered regimes of truth and not the regime of truth of the observers or the analysts. In the words of Martin Luther King (Selby 2008; Hill 2007), the non-violent ethic of love requires seeing people as passive agents of their own worlds of signification. This non-violence of care and love seems to be required more than ever in the ambiguous context of belated inbetweenness in comparison to the King's context of divided society where blacks and whites belonged to two separate com-

munities with more or less clearly defined sets of interests, ideas, and identities, all embedded in a larger context of a homogenous society and history with a dominant regime of truth in the form of modernity.

What seems to be at the roots of irreconcilable differences within and between forces, voices, and faces is the difference in the theory of selection (in what is supposed to take the status of the main regime of truth and how the elements of other regimes of truth need to be selected, appropriated, assimilated, and grafted into the body of the main package of truth) to cure the ailments of the social order. There seems to be no easy or ready-made solution for the two issues of selection, namely, subsumption and substitution/complementarity.

As such, no particular model of selection can be successful in portraying itself as the only possible option for the transformation of the social order. These different models need to compete with each other in a free market for ideas, discourses, and ways of life and through the process of free entry and exit, extinction and survival, where new largely unintended consensual outcomes may emerge via continuous process of rhizomatic and symbolic mutations, sedimenting themselves as the historical embeddedness, and providing stable regime of truth and historical a priori for knowing, acting, and feeling (Hacking 2002; Searle 2010). The irreconcilable differences between the voices and lack of mutual understanding have led to the imposition of each project on the whole population by force in the different periods of the Iranian modern history, which culminated in the short-term restoration of order but long-term experience of revolutions and social movements perpetuating the experience of instability, turbulence and violence. It seems that in the compound state of belated inbetweenness resorting to coercion or obedience does not work, while tacit persuasion through the social production of truth can produce social capacity and consensus to engender a synchronized and harmonized embeddedness. In a sense, the Iranians have to collectively produce the condition of possibility of their own collective and personal actions, and this seems to be possible only through establishing a repeated game of truth tournament (see Axelrod 1984; Axelrod and Dion 1988).

To achieve this, the social interaction needs to be turned into a tournament for truth where alternative entries compete for attracting the allegiance and loyalty of the population in an evolutionary process of chaotic synchronization. To guarantee that this process does not diverge into total atomization of the social space leading to the re-emergence of anarchy and quasi or total civil war, as frequently experienced in the modern history of

Iran, we may need to start from the current default position and by taking a non-violent, non-combative position towards it remove the possibility of another round of reverse social engineering, which allows the philosophical and theoretical ideas alongside ways of being and becoming (discursive and non-discursive practices) about how to organize life, work, and language to grow into maturity via going through several rounds of adoptions and adaptations which in turn gives time and space to people to develop the sense of ownership and attunement towards the emergent outcomes. We can exercise this method in the current ambience on issues like veiling, relation with Israel and the West, sexual freedom, the banking system and *riba*, and corruption, among others, without demonizing or patronizing any side and any voice. The main outline of the non-solution solution revolves around the protection of the field of social interaction where different varieties of hybrid (or pure) forms of truth can emerge and compete with each other, where some may go extinct and others survive and thrive in an evolutionary and spontaneous process of chaotic synchronization without resort to epistemic (violent categorization) or physical violence even if others do so.

The non-solution solution, thus, seems to lay, not in a particular answer to the Iranian misfortune, but establishing a factory or process, which can produce sustainable solutions to the general and particular problems of the nation. The task of selection theory is to establish a selection process which does not favour a particular regime of truth over others a priori by resorting to coercion and repression of the opposite forces but by allowing the alternative hybrid or pure voices to compete with each other for the allegiance and affiliation of the Iranian people, establishing a process which through its non-coercive and non-combative nature can lead to the emergence of a consensual and synchronized embeddedness acting as the condition of possibility for agreeing to disagree and forming unity without uniformity.

This process of selection relies on the three principles of establishment of stable social orders: the principles of embeddedness, emergence, and incommensurability. This process seems to be our best hope for allowing the Iranians to build a new 'house of being' and liberate themselves from discursive homelessness without resorting to the brutality of intelligent design and reverse social engineering and through exploiting the spontaneous and evolutionary processes at work at the heart of emergence of social phenomena.

Currently, Iranians inhabit parallel worlds with parallel time frames and want to have the option of free entry and exit into and from one world into another (they want to party and pray, for example), but the symbolic and imaginary dimensions of each regime of truth do not endorse such rhizomatic movement between irreconcilable worlds. The nomadic passage from one truth land to another requires truth visas, from the land of party to the land of pray and reverse. This evolutionary process of social discovery of truth would allow the emergence of synchronized and harmonized symbolic and imaginary orders, paving the way for the establishment of stable embeddedness acting as the condition of possibility of an order happy in its own skin and at peace with itself and the world. This is like turning the whole society with all its diverse forces, voices, and faces into an R & D institute for discovering 'truth about' life, work, and language. The production of truth will lead to the production of wealth, "confirming Hegel's point that the path to truth is part of the truth" (Zizek 2012: 477).

It is worth noting that without such a process of discovery, all forms of top-down or bottom-up movement fail. In the context of belated inbetweenness, it does not matter whether the movement is top-down like the Shah's White Revolution (with similar pattern in the Qajar period in adopting the Russo-Ottoman model of militaristic-authoritarian mode of modernization reaching its zenith in Amir Kabir's reforms; see Amanat 1997; Matin-Asgari 2013) or bottom-up like the Constitutional Revolution, the ONM, or the Islamic Revolution, it will fail. In this process the majority-minority divide does not apply as well, as people frequently reverse their direction of movements. The issue of intersectionality (gender, class, professional affiliation, ethnicity, generation, etc.) or familial connections are secondary in the truth cycle and the truth divide as we see people of all affiliations and none on all the truth sides. The issue is the confusion permeating the whole of social order. Furthermore, it does not matter whether we are part of diaspora or reside inside the country.

The formation of credible coalitions with the West, the world powers, with Islam, with Persianism, and with modernity are needed to achieve stable development. The world powers have frequently acted as the final arbiters in the history of Iran, contributing to the instability and dysfunctionality of the whole system (Akhavi 1998). Iran cannot be turned into a normal country any time soon. The pressure from below and negotiation from above does not work. Bottom-up movements or top-down changes both fail. Regime change will not change the warring regimes of truth in

Iran. The Iranians need to cut the king's head as Foucault puts it; they need to see their problems not in the realm of politics but in the compound state of belated inbetweenness and its associated market for truth.

A new round of rearrangement of forces, voices, and faces in the truth cycle may be emerging in the near future, where modernity and Persianism are on the rise and Islam is on the defensive and under siege with its own new waves of violence, traces of which are reported in Gholami (2015), among others, but this will change nothing as long as the main questions about life, work, and language are not consensually addressed. Information overload and glocalization as manifested in the experience of the exiled Iranians will change nothing as well. The spread of social media and the emergence of global village and instant messaging will not automatically solve the Iranian dilemmas of broken mirrors and incommensurability. The removal of physical distance cannot remove the social, epistemic, and existential distances.

For functional social life, we need effective and efficient institutions like family, school, hospital, police, corporation, parliament, state, bureaucracy, and the like. And the state of belated inbetweenness with its resulting final arbiters, defiant subjects, and politics of resistance cannot lead to the emergence of stable institutions. The society needs cooperation and competition to produce wealth, and for these it needs consensual rules of the game. By glorifying the politics of defiance, confrontation, and resistance, many analysts unwittingly contribute to the destabilization of the social life and the creation of underdevelopment and poverty. Dialogical interactions can lead to the emergence of new regime of truth with its new consensual institutions and their associated forms of cooperation and competition. Without consensual rules of the game, there is no cooperation and competition, and without them, there is no wealth. But defiance for the sake of regime change, without emergence of consensual regime of truth, destroys the foundations of social existence.

Ultimately if we put the three main statements on truth from Mirza Agha Khan Kermani, from Foucault, and from Hegel, we reach to the main point with regard to Iran that **the path to truth is part of the truth**.

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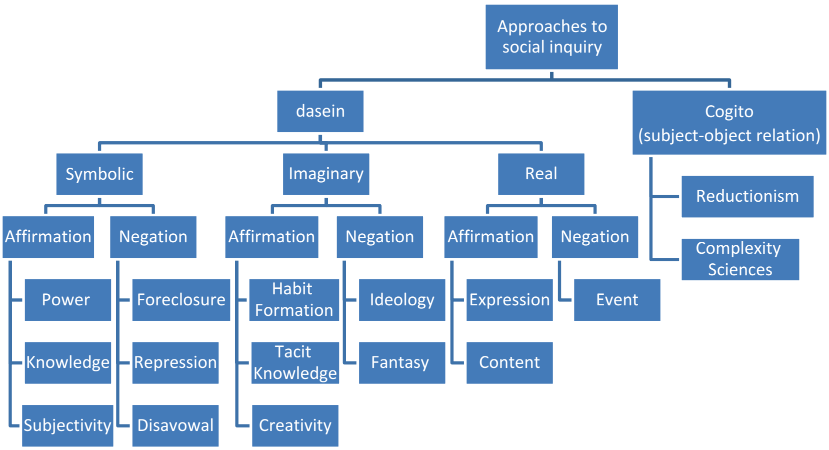
Appendix: Diagram 1—Approaches to Social Inquiry



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